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TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME XV, 1945-6

No. 1, October, 1945

The Unbinding of Prometheus ..... JAMES S. THOMSON 1
Stephen Leacock as Man of Letters ..... G. G. SEDGEWICK 17
Treaty Revision and Revisionism ..... SIR GEOFFREY KNOX 27
The English Press in the Nineteenth Century ..... H. A. INNIS 37
Morality in the Forsyte Saga ..... FREDERICK PHILIP GROVE 54
The *Morceau de Fantaisie* in Verse ..... WYLIE SYPHER 65
Off-Stage Sounds ..... ARTHUR COLBY SPRAGUE 70
Maria Chapdelaine Chez Elle ..... ALLAN MCANDREW 76
Johnson and the Art of Anecdote ..... C. R. TRACY 86

— Reviews —

Soviet Power and Policy ..... FRANK H. UNDERHILL 94
Seventeenth-Century Radicals ..... A. S. P. WOODHOUSE 98
Basic Writings of Saint Thomas ..... V. B. BREZIK 101
Shorter Notice 105

No. 2, January, 1946

The End of an Age ..... W. H. ALEXANDER 107
The Argument of T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* ..... WILLIAM BLISSETT 115
Luther and Germany ..... R. COPER 127
Blougram's Apologetics ..... F. E. L. PRIESTLEY 139
The Commonwealth ..... ALEXANDER BRADY 148
Athens during the Civil War: 1944 ..... H. A. THOMPSON 170
On Rereading Flaubert ..... A. E. CARTER 182
A French Life of Pope ..... W. L. MACDONALD 193

— Reviews —

The Atlantic Community ..... FRANK H. UNDERHILL 196
Time and *Paradise Lost* ..... A. S. P. WOODHOUSE 200
Canadian Army, 1939-1945 ..... ERNEST SIRLUCK 205

519735

No. 3, April, 1946

The RCAF in Newfoundland ..... M. H. M. MacKinnon 213
On the Mortality of Letters ..... A. E. Carter 222
Clio in Canada: The Interpretation of Canadian History ..... W. L. Morton 227
Fascism and Romanticism ..... F. E. Dessauer 235
The Continuity of British Foreign Policy ..... Godfrey Davies 242
Atomic Energy and World-Order ..... Frank Allen 256

Letters in Canada: 1945. Edited by A. S. P. Woodhouse
Part I: English-Canadian Letters
Introduction 269
I. Poetry ..... E. K. Brown 269
II. Fiction ..... J. R. MacGillivray 280
III. Remaining Material ..... The Editor and Others 289

No. 4, July, 1946

Laying the Blame on Labour ..... H. L. Stewart 333
Thomas Hobbes: Jurisprudence at the Crossroads ..... George L. Mosse 346
The Character and Poetry of Keats, by Archibald Lampman With a Prefatory Note by E. K. Brown 356
Alfred North Whitehead ..... A. H. Johnson 373
Disproportion: A Study in the Work of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester ..... Fredelle Bruser 384

Letters in Canada: 1945. Edited by A. S. P. Woodhouse
Part II.
French-Canadian Letters ..... W. E. Collin 397
New-Canadian Letters ..... Watson Kirkconnell 426

— Reviews —

Pindar ..... W. D. Woodhead 430
Bigot ..... Ernest Sirluck 433
Two Cambridge Worthies ..... Gilbert Norwood 442
Augustine's Quest of Wisdom ..... J. M. Kelly 445
Modern German Literature ..... W. L. Graff 446

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CONTENTS

VOL. XV OCTOBER, 1945 No. 1

The Unbinding of Prometheus.....JAMES S. THOMSON 1
Stephen Leacock as Man of Letters.....G. G. SEDGEWICK 17
Treaty Revision and Revisionism.....SIR GEOFFREY KNOX 27
The English Press in the Nineteenth Century.....H. A. INNIS 37
Morality in the Forsyte Saga.....FREDERICK PHILIP GROVE 54
The *Morceau de Fantaisie* in Verse.....WYLIE SYPHER 65
Off-Stage Sounds.....ARTHUR COLBY SPRAGUE 70
Maria Chapdelaine Chez Elle.....ALLAN MCANDREW 76
Johnson and the Art of Anecdote.....C. R. TRACY 86

—Reviews—

Soviet Power and Policy.....FRANK H. UNDERHILL 94
Seventeenth-Century Radicals.....A. S. P. WOODHOUSE 98
Basic Writings of Saint Thomas.....V. B. BREZIK 101
Shorter Notice..... 105

519735

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THE UNBINDING OF PROMETHEUS*

JAMES S. THOMSON

PROMETHEUS BOUND is the tragedy of civilization. In Greek mythology, Prometheus brought the gift of fire to earth and so gave to man the arts of civilized life: but, as a penalty for his presumption and to expiate his folly, the fire-bringer was impaled by Zeus. The compassionate liberator of men brought captivity to himself. The Titan Prometheus, as his name suggests,[1] endowed mankind with the capacity to rise above the constraints of immediacy by the power of thought, and thus men began to acquire skilled mastery over their environment. But man is creature as well as creator. There are limits to his freedom which are not of his own imposition. Within human life there is an unremitting tension, from which, with advance in technical ability, we are never set free. The Promethean gifts carry their own problems with them, from which, as yet, no way of escape has been found.

The Promethean theme presents a tragic question that in varying form has continued to torment the mind of man, and never more so than at the present time. Is civilization a blessing or a curse? Do we increase happiness by the advance of knowledge? Or, is the life of man beset by a persistent antinomy whereby every new invention carries with it fresh evils and every anticipated boon is offset by unexpected problems? "Man's Unhappiness as I construe," cries Carlyle, "comes of his greatness: it is because there is an Infinite in him, which with all his cunning he cannot bury under the Finite."[2] These speculations, we may admit, are probably futile, although unavoidable, because they are thrust upon us by the very conditions of existence. But may we not ask whether there is any release from their condemnation? Cannot man have greatness and happiness, too? Cannot Prometheus be unbound?

In contemporary life, this age-long problem has reached a desperate stage. Man seems to have devised a technical apparatus for his own self-destruction. Even if we refuse, as we ought, to identify civilization with its mechanical equipment and with the increase of our capacity to adapt and exploit our physical environment, nevertheless, the sense of moral and spiritual defeat sits heavily on the modern mind. The late Professor A. A. Bowman begins his book on *A Sacramental Universe*[3] with these words: "The age in which we live is notable for two things, man's progressive triumph over nature in the sphere of theoretical and applied science, and

*Read before the Royal Society of Canada, Section 2, at the annual meeting, May, 1945.

[1] Προμηθεία is *forethought*.

[2] *Sartor Resartus*, Book II, chap. ix.

[3] Archibald Allan Bowman, *A Sacramental Universe* (Princeton, 1939).

his tragic inability to order his own life. Every year adds to our knowledge of the physical world: every year brings home to us the baffling inscrutability of human nature as revealed in our disordered civilisation." A fearful conflict now engages the energies of almost the entire human race. The tragic spectacle is rendered more terrifying by the scientific skill employed in the vast holocaust of destruction. Even the superb attainments of heroism and self-sacrifice reached by the spirit of man in our time do not relieve us from a sense of foreboding in the contemporary *impasse*. For we are haunted by a conviction that the war is an Apocalypse of civilization's diseased state now crying out for anxious thought and drastic remedy. We have come to the end of the play. Prometheus is being hurled "down to black Tartarus."[4] His final speech falls on the ear:

> And now, indeed, the earth is shaken no longer in word, but in action. From the depth the reverberation of a thunder-clap roars beside me; the fiery forked lightening flashes out; and whirlwinds roll the dust; blasts of all the winds spring forth to take up their hostile position in contrary array. And the sky is mingled with the sea. This tempest manifestly comes to create a terror from Zeus himself.[5]

Prometheus is presented in the poems of Hesiod as a rascally character who employs guile to steal the secret knowledge of fire and so to endow man with the technical arts of civilization. But "in nowise is the mind of Zeus to be escaped," and for the knavery of Prometheus, a price was exacted, nothing less than the making of woman-kind, at once a blessing and a bane. In the *Works and Days*,[6] it is Pandora who is created with her famous casket of sorrowful gifts. All these fly out to afflict the life of man, save only Hope, which remained within by the intervention of Zeus himself, at once to inspire and torment the inward spirit. In the *Theogony*,[7] Prometheus was impaled and bound by Zeus, until at last he was liberated by the consent of the Olympian Ruler. However, once again, he matched his wits against "the all-powerful son of Kronos," and this led to the creation of the daughters of woman, fascinating, beautiful, but fatal to man's peace.

In the preface to his *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley said that "the only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus is Satan." Macaulay came to the same conclusion in his essay on Milton—although, it should be noted that Shelley rates the Titan above the Biblical Spirit of Evil in nobility and character, while Macaulay reverses the evaluation. The affinity, and at the same time, the difference between the early Greek and Hebrew myths of Prometheus and the Tempter are very striking. Both are dealing with essentially the same problem, that a condition in the life of man has developed which Wordsworth declared to be repeated in the experience of each individual—"there hath pass'd away a glory from the

[4] *Prometheus Bound* 1050-1.
[5] *Ibid.*, closing speech of Prometheus, 1080-90.
[6] Lines 42-106.
[7] Lines 507-612.

earth." Man has listened to the voice of the tempter, and his paradise is lost. He has penetrated the Divine secret, but the allurements of knowledge have brought the curse of toil. And in both, banishment from the pristine paradise is also connected with man's relation to woman. The adolescent stage has been reached with its simultaneous ripening of sexual and intellectual powers—the child has become a man.

The ancient myth provides Aeschylus with the theme for his sombre, but magnificent drama of *Prometheus Bound.* The rascal of the heavenly circle becomes the embodiment of human tragedy. The play opens with the binding of the Titan, who is led to the Rock of Expiation by Power and Force (ΚΡΑΤΟΣ and ΒΙΑ). Violence has overwhelmed the compassionate friend of mortal men, and a triumphant Zeus leaves the hero to his long exile.

The drama is a tragedy of passion rather than action and depends for its effect entirely on its intellectual appeal. The central figure is reduced to inaction by the crushing fiat of the Divine Sovereign; but, nevertheless, he can still speak. At first he is majestically silent, but in his successive conversations with the Chorus of the Daughters of Ocean, Oceanus their father, Io, and finally Hermes, the messenger and servant of Zeus, the conflict of the play unfolds itself. Prometheus "is bloody but unbowed." For he has been man's friend, taking his side against an upstart and unreasonable tyrant among the gods (*ὁ νέος ταγὸς μακάρων*).[8] Zeus had sought to destroy the race of men, but Prometheus had championed their cause against the designs of heaven.[9] In a swift-moving passage[10] Aeschylus describes the coming of civilization through the endowments of reason and understanding. First he depicts the life of man when his only kinship was with the soil. Then man awakened to recognize the order latent in natural phenomena. Next, he devised the arts of mathematics and writing, the making of the calendar, and the construction of ships. After that the poet speaks of the healing arts and skill in divination, finally, the hidden power of metals, iron and bronze, silver and gold. All the arts are from Prometheus (*πᾶσαι τέχναι Βροτοῖσιν ἐκ Προμηθέως*)."[11]

Such, then, are the Promethean gifts. Man has become *homo faber.* But the giver himself is banished *exul, inops,* to drie his strange wierd. Man has lost his Eden, but his champion can still make an appeal beyond Zeus himself to strange impersonal Necessity (Αναγκή), within whose sweep even the Monarch of Heaven is embraced. The helmsmen of Necessity are the Fates and Furies, who guide the ship of life on the long voyage of time. In their long reckoning, the tyrant son of Kronos will yet have to call on the Fore-knowing Titan. There is an "ultimate decency of things," wherein

[8] *Prometheus Bound* 96.
[9] *Ibid.* 238.
[10] *Ibid.* 459ff.
[11] *Ibid.* 506.

all is duly apportioned between gods, demi-gods, and men. Prometheus may suffer, but he can wait, a prisoner of hope.

Even as the earlier myths of Hesiod provoked comparison with the beginning of Genesis, so the tragedy of *Prometheus Bound* suggests the Biblical drama of Job.[12] Hesiod and Genesis are writing of the time "when all the world was young," whereas Aeschylus and the writer of Job portray the human encounter when man is in full flight, grown up, but not as yet grown old. The Greek play and the Hebrew poem deal with the same profound subject, but in a very different manner, not only in method of treatment but in their conception of the problem. Herbert Spencer dismissed the final questions of existence by an airy gesture of agnosticism. "The power which the universe manifests to us is inscrutable,"[13] he declared, and then went on to reduce its motions to the most scrutable terms of matter and force. But it was the very inscrutability of the Divine ways with men that gave poignancy to the condition of Job and Prometheus. "To the unregenerate Prometheus Vinctus of a man," says Carlyle, "it is ever the bitterest aggravation of his wretchedness that he is conscious of Virtue, but he feels himself the victim not of suffering only but of injustice."[14] The Titan did recognize that there was a connection between his exploits and his fate, and although he protested, he could await, with defiant hope, the long restitution of time. But Job's questions lay deeper, as he resented the implication that his sad condition had any relation to the manner of his life. He could only suffer and submit.

Both *Prometheus Bound* and Job depict man as having an inescapable encounter with what lies beyond him, not simply in the mechanical relation of effect to cause, but as a Finite Object addressed by an Infinite Subject. Immanuel Kant gave a classical rendering of its intellectual version. "Human reason in one sphere of its cognition is called upon to consider questions which it cannot decline, as they are presented by its own nature, but which it cannot answer as they transcend every faculty of the mind."[15] The Old Testament dramatist provided no solution to the profound problem which is raised by his book. The same result was achieved for Aeschylus, but not intentionally: rather, as the accidental result of historical causes. It is generally accepted that he wrote *Prometheus Bound* as the first play of a trilogy. One recent editor[16] rejects this view, who not only denies that *Prometheus Unbound* and *Prometheus, the Fire-Bringer* ever existed, but also that the extant play deals with a deep philosophical theme. Rather, he avers, it is completely contemporary. Prometheus is Aeschylus

[12]André Maurois writes that Shelley composed his *Prometheus Unbound* as "a lyrical drama on the Book of Job" (*Ariel*, Penguin ed., p. 138).

[13]*First Principles* (fifth ed.), chap ii, p. 39.

[14]*Sartor Resartus*, book II, chap. vii.

[15]*Critique of Pure Reason*, Preface to the first edition.

[16]E. G. Harman, *The Prometheus Bound of Aeschylus: Represented in English and Explained* (London, 1920).

himself, and Zeus is the upstart Athenian government. He adduces good evidence to maintain his position, but surely the two interpretations are not exclusive to one another. Current events can be represented *sub specie aeternitatis*. The survival of *Prometheus Bound* is sufficient evidence that the play has had more than a passing interest. Cicero certainly thought so: "And surely tradition would never have preserved the stories of Atlas upholding heaven, or Prometheus spiked to Caucasus, or Cepheus set amidst the stars with his wife, his son-in-law and his daughter, unless the divine knowledge of heavenly existence had handed on their name by the fiction of a fairy-tale."[17] One other recent editor[18] has carefully collected the reputed fragments of the lost plays and has endeavoured to reconstruct the lost trilogy pretty much on the same plan as biologists endeavour to reproduce prehistoric animals from small discovered parts. However, while we should have liked to see how Aeschylus finally freed the Titan, literary fate has rendered the surviving drama more impressive, and possibly even more adequate to its theme than if we had the other two dramas in our possession. *Prometheus Bound* remains what Karl Barth described the *summa theologica* of Thomas Aquinas to be—a torso[19]—because it points beyond itself, and by its very nature, must be incomplete. But, even so, in uncompleted form, it is surely the very essence of the tragedy with which it deals.

Mr. George Thomson, in his introduction to the edition just cited[20] draws attention to the "cosmic breath and grandeur" of Aeschylus' trilogy. He points out that in the magnificent sweep of the poet's thought Heaven and Earth are embraced. It is "the evolution of God and man, the history of the universe." For the play has a theological as well as a human interest. Zeus is portrayed as "the new ruler of the blessed ones" (*ὁ νέος ταγὸς μακάρων*).[21] The naïve anthropomorphism of the Olympian circle has given place to the austere sovereignty of Zeus. The Ruler of gods and men is now an arbitrary deity, stripped of the heroic virtues and passions that earlier religious ideas had attributed to the heavenly beings, but not as yet endowed with the spiritual attributes of a true monotheism. We must beware of reading too much into the poet's thought, but it is equally easy to under-estimate the depth of his insight. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that he was protesting in the form of a grand imaginative creation against an unworthy thought of God, and to that extent was registering at least a negative stage in the evolution of natural theology. Macneile Dixon supports this view.[22] This much is certain that the poet sets before us the profoundest of all tragic themes as he exhibits man caught

[17] *Tusc. Disput.* v. iii. 8.
[18] *The Prometheus Bound*, ed. George Thomson (Cambridge, 1932).
[19] Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of the Word of God* (Edinburgh, 1936), 23.
[20] *The Prometheus Bound*, ed. Thomson, 38.
[21] *Prometheus Bound*, 96.
[22] W. M. Dixon, *Tragedy* (London, 1924), 72 ff.

in the sweep of a destiny which is not his choosing, living his life in conditions not of his devising, and which yet are inescapable, and in which, nevertheless, he must conduct himself with a worthy dignity, and, if possible, with some final hope.

The Promethean theme, either explicitly or implicitly, runs through much subsequent literature. Indeed, wherever the human struggle with circumstance or fate has reached an acute stage demanding solution, either the portrayal of the captive Prometheus or the secret of his unbinding has become a major engagement for the philosophic imagination. Strangely enough, Lucretius, in *De Rerum Natura*, while he refers to the gift of fire and the subsequent coming of civilization, makes no explicit reference to the Greek myth.[23] Not that the acquisition of power brought necessary enrichment to human life. "Rather men wanted to become famous and powerful, so that their fortune might rest on a secure foundation, and through riches, they might enjoy a tranquil existence. But, all in vain, because in the very struggle to reach the height of fame, the road was beset with danger, and even from the top, envy, like a bolt of lightning, strikes and hurls them down in scorn to darkest hell."[24] On the other hand, Ovid, at the outset of *Metamorphoses* speaks of the golden age (*aurea prima sata est aetas*) when "Man was born, whether he who is the maker of all things, made man from his own heavenly seed, thus to be the beginning of a better world, or whether the earth itself still new, retained some elements of its kindred sky, having lately been withdrawn from the upper air."[25] But there came the ages of brass, iron, and gold (*nocens ferrum ferroque nocentius aurum*) and *vivitur ex rapto*. Thus we have the same recurring theme, ancient and new as the life of man.

Francis Bacon in his essay *Of Adversity*, roundly states that by Prometheus "human nature is represented." It is in this same essay that he remarks, "Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament: Adversity is the blessing of the New," adding, for him, the quaintly poetic reflection, "Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols: and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath laboured more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon." This is as near as the sanguine mind of Bacon approached to the discussion of tragedy, but he devoted the longest of his expositions in *De Sapientia Veterum* to the subject of Prometheus.[26] He discussed the myth in great detail and with considerable insight, although without any reference to the problem of man's self-defeat which is at least one essential element in the humanist interpretation. Rather it provides him with an opportunity to speak of a familiar theme—the need to combine "the Dogmatical and the Empirical," in "bringing down new gifts from the gods."

[23] *De Rerum Natura*, 1091 ff.
[24] *Ibid.*, 1120-6.
[25] Book I, 78-81.
[26] *De Sapientia Veterum*, XXVI.

Bacon's interpretation is in accord with the modern spirit. The Promethean *leitmotif* is the human struggle—man's never-ending contest with circumstance in the world without and, even more, in the world within him. By his very nature, he refuses to be bound but his victories are uneasy. Consequently, the theme moves alternately between the portrayal of man in what is regarded as the essential tragedy of his condition and the possibility of his eventual escape from the long entail of frustration. It writes itself over great stretches of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as it captivated the minds of the philosophic rebels, who drew the inspiration of their taste for tragedy in mourning over the human lapse either from some original state prior to the blight of civilization or from the golden age of Grecian loveliness.

In one of his earliest works which won him a prize awarded by L'Academie de Dijon, Rousseau discoursed on the theme "Whether the founding of the Sciences and the Arts had helped to refine morals," in which he remarked that "our souls have corrupted themselves to the extent that our sciences and arts have gone forward to perfection." He then proceeded to ask "Can it be said that this is a calamity peculiar to our time?" only to reply with obvious conviction "No, gentlemen, the evils arising from our empty curiosity are as old as the world itself."

Byron tells us: "Of the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus I was passionately fond as a boy (it was one of the Greek plays we read thrice a year at Harrow).... The *Prometheus*, if not exactly in my plan, has always been so much in my head, that I can easily conceive its influence over all or anything that I have written."[27]

Byron was essentially a poet of intense feeling, and wrote himself into all his work. It seems undoubted that he dramatized himself in the Promethean figure, seeing himself now the imprisoned victim, now the defiant iconoclast, and again, the swaggering rascal, determined to affront the world with his impudence. The writer of *Don Juan* and *The Deformed Transformed*, of *Manfred* and the lyric songs of such exquisite beauty, is a rare study for the psychologist and everywhere his adolescent self-projection will provide at least one clue to the understanding of his passionate nature. As he observes, the influence of Aeschylus' tragic creation infected his entire outlook. He saw the Promethean character now in *The Girl of Cadiz*, now as poesy,[28] and again in no less a figure than the great Napoleon, who had a singular fascination for the poet. In his *Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte*, he suggested that his hero was "like the thief of fire from heaven," adding

> Foredoomed by God—by man accurst,
> And that last act, thought not thy worst,
> The very Fiend's arch mock:
> He in his fall preserved his pride
> And, if a mortal, had as proudly died.

---

[27] Letter to John Murray, Oct. 12, 1817 (Byron, *Works: Letters and Journals*, IV, 170).
[28] *The Prophecy of Dante*, IV, 10 ff.

In more bitter mood he wrote of Napoleon in *The Age of Bronze* likening him to Prometheus, "a name eternal as the rolling year," and suggesting ironically,

> He teaches them the lesson taught so long
> So oft, so vainly—learn to do no wrong![29]

When *Manfred* first appeared, Byron accepted the suggested resemblance to the play of Aeschylus, but there are other works in which the affinity is even more striking, for example, *Cain* and *Heaven and Earth*. He wrote one poem explicitly on the theme, thus interpreting the tragic figure:

> Thy Godlike crime was to be kind
> To render with thy precepts less
> The sum of human wretchedness,
> And strengthen Man with his own mind. . . .[30]
> Thou art a symbol and a sign
> To Mortals of their fate and force:
> Like thee, Man is in part divine,
> A troubled stream from a pure source:
> And Man in portions can foresee
> His own funereal destiny:
> To which his Spirit may oppose
> Itself—an equal to all woes—
> And a firm will, and a deep sense,
> Which even in torture can descry
> Its own concentrated recompense,
> Triumphant where it dares defy
> And making Death a Victory.[31]

In the bathetic scene when Trelawny[32] cremated the body of Shelley, it is recorded that Byron apostrophized the dead poet: "Ah, Will of iron! This then is all that remains of your splendid courage. . . . Like Prometheus you defied Jupiter, and behold. . . ."[33] The noble lord was still being pursued, even at that tragic moment, by the familiar haunting theme, but doubtless he also had in mind the remarkable engagement of Shelley's own poetic genius with the same subject. In no respect did the two poets display so completely at once the affinity and divergence of their minds. For Byron, there was no escape from the Promethean tragedy, except a defiant and at times even a swaggering acceptance. For Shelley, the same condition was man's superlative opportunity to achieve the essential victory of the human spirit.

Prometheus Unbound is the most explicit attempt in English literature to deal with the problem propounded by the Greek tragedy. Not that

[29]*The Age of Bronze*, 226-32.

[30]Cf. *Manfred*, I, 154: "The Mind—the Spirit—the Promethean spark."

[31]Byron, *Works: Poetry*, IV, 82.

[32]Byron to Trelawny: "Why, Trelawny, I knew you were a pagan, but not that you were a pagan priest! You do it very well." (Margaret Armstrong, *Trelawny*, p. 257.)

[33]Maurois, *Ariel*, 249.

Shelley's poem is in any sense an imaginative attempt to complete the unfinished trilogy of Aeschylus. On the contrary, he deliberately eschewed this task, because not only did he take sides with Prometheus against his Oppressor, but his purpose was to unbind the Titan by revealing Jupiter in his true character as the enemy of mankind.

> And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,
> Which under many a name and many a form,
> Strange, savage, ghastly, dark and execrable,
> Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world;
> And which the nations, panic-stricken served
> With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love
> Dragged to his altars, soiled and garlandless
> And slain among men's unreclaiming tears,
> Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate.[34]

Thus, he "was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of Mankind."[35]

In Shelley's drama, the climax is not so much the unbinding of Prometheus as the dethronement of Jupiter at the close of the first scene in the third act. The real tragedy of human life is that men have been ruled not by God but by an impersonal Being who is really a creation of their own minds, yet very potent. The history of civilization is the dialectic of man's self-torture by illusions which he is compelled to spin out of his own intellectual and spiritual nature. God, who is the Spirit of Love, is *Deus Absconditus*, and Jupiter, who is the symbol of false theology, occupies the vacant throne:

> but he refused
> The birthright of their being, knowledge, power
> The skill which wields the elements, the thought
> Which pierces this dim universe like light,
> Self-empire and the majesty of love:
> For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus
> Gave wisdom, which is strength to Jupiter,
> And with this law alone, "let man be free"
> Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.[36]

From this stage in man's history, descended a multitude of ills

> And Jove now reigned: for on the race of man
> First famine, and then toil, and then disease,
> Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,
> Fell.

Next came the arts of civilization as man

> tortured to his will
> Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power. . . .
> And science struck the thrones of earth and heaven
> Which shook, but fell not[37]

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[34] *Prometheus Unbound*, III, iv, 180-8.
[35] *Ibid.*, preface.
[36] *Ibid.*, II, iv, 38-46.
[37] *Ibid.*, II, iv, 49-52, 68-75.

Thus man, emancipated by Promethean gifts, yet lived a slave of his own creation. His unbinding must come from within by the releasing power of love:

> Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul
> Whose nature is its own divine control,
> Where all things flow, as rivers to the sea

Thus it is only when

> Conquest is dragged captive through the deep,
> Love from its awful throne of patriot power
> In the wise heart. . .
> springs
> And folds over the world its healing wings

that man will go free,

> To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite
> To forgive wrongs darker than death or night
> To defy Power, which seems omnipotent.
> To love and bear: to hope till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates
> Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent:
> This, like thy glory, Titan! is to be
> Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free:
> This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory![38]

In his sublime poem, Shelley has travelled a long way from the adolescent *Necessity of Atheism*. He is still campaigning in the spirit which he himself expressed quoting from "a Scotch philosopher" as " 'a passion for reforming the world'," [39] and which for many another of lesser calibre would have earned the proper neglect that ought to be the reward of prigs. But he has now passed beyond the attitude of protest and rebellion to a positive faith in man's capacity for self-emancipation from himself by the strength of his own spiritual nature, which is akin to the universal soul of intellectual beauty and love. Thus the poet in his own spiritual development is an epitome of civilization's long agony and hope of final release from the tyranny of falsehood.

Byron dedicated his dramatic work *Sardanapolus* "to the illustrious Goethe" [40] and we know that there developed an admiring interest in the elderly German poet towards the young British writer. Indeed, Goethe wrote concerning *Manfred*, "This singular intellectual poet has taken my *Faustus* to himself and extracted from it the strangest nourishment for his hypochondriac humour. . . . I cannot enough admire his genius." [41] Byron was moved to retort in a letter that the poem was his own, that he had never read Marlowe's *Faustus*, and that he had only heard some scenes of Goethe's *Faust* in a verbal translation. However, it is notable that it was

[38] *Ibid.*, IV, 400-2, 556-61, 570-8.
[39] *Ibid.*, preface.
[40] Byron, *Works: Poetry*, IV, 81.
[41] *Ibid.*, *Letters and Journals*, IV, 174.

in this same letter he mentioned the dominating influence of Aeschylus' tragedy on all his thought from his youthful years.[42] The similarity between the Promethean and the *Faust* themes is too obvious for discussion. *Faust* is the tragedy of man's passional and appetitive nature making infinite demands in a world of moral law, which is not of his devising. Whereas Prometheus is the intellectual version of the same tragic condition. Both come to their judgment in the realm of action, and propound the same question for civilized life as the latent problem to be solved before man as a finite and created spirit can come to true freedom in a regulated universe.

It would take us too far afield to trace the influence of the Promethean theme on the German mind, as it reflects itself in literature, philosophy, and above all, in politics. A recent timely work is devoted to the subject.[43] The writer traces the fixation of what he calls "the psyche of the Byronic Man," the Prometheus-Lucifer, on German thought, and it would form a complete study in itself, not the least interesting part of which would be an estimate of its effects on the contemporary world-scene. Schopenhauer in *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* gave the philosophical rendering of the theme. For him, man is cursed by thought, and even more by will. "Thus, in proportion as knowledge attains to distinctness, as consciousness ascends, pain also increases, and therefore reaches its highest degree in man. And, then, again, the more distinctly a man knows, the more intelligent he is, the more pain he has: the man who is gifted with genius suffers most of all."[44] Schopenhauer was haunted by the Kantean *impasse* between the world of thought and the world of things, "and never the twain shall meet." Only where Kant found relief for his problem in the postulates of practical reason, Schopenhauer encountered the very core of life's intolerable dilemma. For the Will, tied to thought, meets inevitable frustration, and what the mind conceives, the will cannot execute. Hence the tragic dichotomy in the life of man, described long ago in such profound moral earnestness by St. Augustine.[45] "We pursue our life, however, with great interest and much solicitude as long as possible, as we blow out a soap-bubble as long and as large as possible, although we know perfectly well it will burst."[46] Here then is the essence of tragedy:

> The unspeakable pain, the wail of humanity, the triumph of evil, the scornful mastery of chance, and the irretrievable fall of the just and innocent is here presented to us: and in this lies a significant hint of the nature of the world and of existence. It is the strife of will with itself, which here, completely unfolded at the highest grade of its objectivity, comes into fearful prominence. It becomes visible in the suffering of men, which is now introduced, partly through chance and error, which appear as the rulers of the world, personified as fate, on account of their insidiousness, which even reaches the appearance of

[42] *Ibid.*, 170-4; and see above.
[43] Cedric Hentschel, *The Byronic Teuton* (London, 1940).
[44] *The World as Will and Idea*, book IV (Eng. trans., p. 56).
[45] *Confessions*, VIII, 21.
[46] Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, book IV, p. 57.

design: partly it proceeds from man himself, through the self-mortifying efforts of a few, through the wickedness and perversity of most.[47]

Nietzsche, the self-styled Dionysean pessimist, acknowledged Schopenhauer as his master, or rather as his intellectual footman ushering him into the arena of his own grandiloquent philosophy. He was Byron *redivivus*, but without the restraint of the poet's love of beauty. He found release from life's intolerable tragedy in a world where he himself alone could live, in a realm of aristocratic anarchy, of which the Nazi civilization is a very terrifying embodiment. This method of unbinding Prometheus is not likely to appeal to our generation!

The opening chapter of Carlyle's *Past and Present* is a much quoted passage of literature. Although written almost a century before, only a few short years ago, it might have passed for a commentary on contemporary economic life.

> England is full of wealth, of multifarious produce, supply for human want in every kind: yet England is dying of inanition. With unabated bounty the land of England blooms and grows: waving with its yellow harvests: thick-studded with workshops, industrial implements, with fifteen millions of workers, understood to be the strongest, the cunningest and the willingest our Earth ever had: these men are here: the work they have done, the fruit they have realised is here, abundant, exuberant on every hand of us: and behold, some baleful fiat of Enchantment has gone forth saying, "Touch it not, ye workers, ye master-workers, ye master-idlers: none of you can touch it, no man of you shall be the better for it: this is enchanted fruit."

It was on this situation that Carlyle added the commentary, "There was something that reminded me of Dante's Hell in the look of all this; and I rode swiftly away."[48] He might, with equal force, have remarked that he had encountered the latest version of the ancient Promethean problem—how man is to be set free from the entanglements of his own mastery over his environment. His writing is surely a proper preface to the great engagement of civilization in our time. We hear the same theme thundered out in an even more potent voice by Karl Marx as he discourses on the infamous career and inevitable end of capitalist society. In his great central fifteenth chapter of *Capital* on "Machinery and Modern Industry," he traced the baleful effects of the industrial revolution. Admitting its one-sided statement, and without accepting his economic theories, nevertheless, the human situation created by modern invention and its application to the labour of production presents us with a problem that cries out for solution. Prometheus has loaded us with gifts, but the world is filled with horrors, which advance in knowledge has at once made more terrible and more insistent for relief. Marx himself likened the situation to Prometheus bound to his rock. The law of capitalist production, he

[47] *Ibid.*, book III, p. 51.
[48] *Past and Present*, book I, chap. i.

says, "establishes an accumulation of misery corresponding to the accumulation of capital."[49]

This prophetic vision of misery has darkened into new horrors for our time. Technical skill has bound the world of men into a vast struggling mass, engaged in dreadful strife. The very extent of knowledge and the accumulation of power confront the mind of civilized man with problems that are as old as the age of iron and bronze, but now have reached an obvious crisis in history. And as if in fulfilment of the Promethean theme, human capacity to deal with our now world-wide condition has diminished with the increase of its tragic intensity. Gone are the days of bright optimism when we could almost hear G. H. Lewes cry out with excitement:

> A new era has dawned. For the first time in history an explanation of the world, society and man is presented that is thoroughly homogeneous and at the same time in accordance with accurate knowledge: having the reach of an all-embracing system, it condenses human knowledge into a Doctrine and co-ordinates all the methods by which that knowledge has been reached and will in future be extended. . . . Its basis is science—the positive knowledge we have attained and may attain of all phenomena whatever. Its superstructure is the hierarchy of the sciences, i.e., that distribution and co-ordination of general truths which transforms the scattered and independent sciences into an organic whole wherein each part depends on all that precedes and determines all that succeeds.[50]

Even before the impact of two world-conflicts had shattered the proud tower of our modern Babel, the whisper of doubt, "the little rift within the lute," was beginning to threaten the new music of humanity. When Thomas Hardy wrote his famous ending to *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, it was what Thomas Carlyle would call "an Incident in Modern Literature": "Justice was done, and the President of the Immortals, in Aeschylean phrase, had ended his sport with Tess." Even if the writer protested in the prefaces which he felt compelled to write for later editions that the novel was "neither didactic nor aggressive," he had registered a turning-point in literary history. Man's nerve was shaken, as it probably ought to have been, and has not as yet recovered any release from its tension. Rather the sense of frustration has deepened, until its portraiture has become an accepted, almost stereotyped, literary vogue. Every young Hamlet who now aspires to write first fills his nostrils with the rottenness of our modern Denmark and then distils a native gall to darken the ribbon of his typewriter. It is altogether significant that the year in which the contemporary conflict broke upon the world in its final intensity was the year in which James Joyce published *Finnegan's Wake*. Until that strange corpse is properly buried and forgotten, Prometheus will continue to writhe in torture on his rock.

Sensitive writers of the twentieth century have not been unaware of the change in intellectual climate. In eloquent prose, Mr. Bertrand Russell

[49]Karl Marx, *Capital*, chap. xxv.
[50]G. H. Lewes, *History of Philosophy* (third ed., London, 1867), II, 590.

wrote in praise of Tragedy as the proudest and most triumphant of all the arts and endeavoured to build "the soul's habitation" "on the firm foundation of unyielding despair."[51] C. E. Montague, in prose less eloquent but more sensitive, at the close of the last great war, issued what he called "fair warning"[52] to the world that we must "tak' a thocht and mind." Mr. Aldous Huxley sent a wave of horror across the minds of his readers by his *Brave New World*. Mr. Walter Lippmann left the modern house of the human spirit empty, swept and garnished, although he confronted its inhabitant with the inescapableness of circumstance. "There is no theory of the meaning and value of events which he is compelled to accept, but he is none the less compelled to accept the events."[53] He posed us with what is described as an enforced decision in which modern minds "are compelled to choose, consciously, clearly and with full realization of what the choice implies, between religion as a system of cosmic government and religion as insight into a cleansed and matured personality: between God conceived as master of that fate, creator, providence and king, and God conceived as the highest good at which they might aim."[54] It is Shelley's release for Prometheus, the dethronement of Jupiter, and the worship by man of his ideal self. "Once he knows that he has created the image of God, the reality of it vanishes like last night's dream."[55] As with Mr. Bertrand Russell, Mr. Lippmann's final resting-place for the human mind is an aristocratic world-contempt, an austere retreat for elect and courageous souls. The following sentence might have been written by Seneca or Epictetus: "And so the mature man would take the world as it comes and remain quite unperturbed"[56]—a comforting doctrine for those who have the temerity to pronounce with assurance upon their own maturity. But if that be the test, who should stand? The solutions of Lippmann and Russell are typical of the sincere and perplexed minds in our time. The latest is Professor Harold J. Laski[57] who, under the stress of an excitement which does him much credit, realizes the spiritual poverty with which we face unparalleled tasks in the history of civilization. The ancient creeds have lost their power, but man needs a faith. He must find some centre of devotion beyond himself, but, as he avers, "there is little reason to suppose that the recovery of values in our civilization would be the outcome of a revival of faith in the supernatural."[58] Professor Laski finds his solution in a religious spirit which he defines as "an insistent call to devote oneself

[51]Bertrand Russell, *A Free Man's Worship* (Portland, Me., 1923).
[52]C. E. Montague, *Disenchantment* (London, 1922), chap. xvi.
[53]Walter Lippmann, *A Preface to Morals* (New York, 1929), 9.
[54]*Ibid.*, 325.
[55]*Ibid.*, *36.*
[56]*Ibid.*, 329.
[57]H. J. Laski, *Faith, Reason and Civilization* (London, 1944).
[58]*Ibid.*, 34.

to an end beyond the private satisfaction of personality,"[59] to be derived from the Marxian philosophy of history, in which individuals are comparatively irrelevant. "The great moving forces of history," wrote Trotsky, "are super-personal in character."[60] For the supernatural we must substitute the supra-individual or devotion to the ends of humanity in the mass. Mr. Julian Huxley had already anticipated all this in his "Religion without Revelation," only with biological fervour he extends the outreach of his faith to confess, "My final belief is in life."[61]

Questioning voices have been raised against this benign "enthusiasm for humanity" and its naïve solution for human tragedy by the simple method of bowing out the final conditions of our existence. Professor Reinhold Niebuhr is the most forceful of our North American critics. Even before he began to lift prophetic fire from the Barthian altar-flames, he was asking whether there is any good reason to believe that humanity in the mass is likely to act in a more altruistic fashion than men are in the habit of doing as individuals. Do we really conquer the profound problems of man by writing the word large, and by prefixing the adjective "social"? Can society as a matter of fact realize the noble ideals of the Christian gospel, whose principle is love rather than law? "The conflict," he writes, "is between those who have a confidence in human virtue which human nature cannot support and those who have looked too deeply into life and their own souls to place their trust in so broken a reed."[62] Since then he has looked even more steadily at the forgotten dimensions of our existence and has insisted that Prometheus on his rock is no invention of the theological mind, but the very epitome of the human situation. Man's broken life, and his own impotence to amend his tragic plight, are intimations that he is neither the master of his fate nor the captain of his soul, and that the beginning, rather than the end of all wisdom is the fear of God.[63]

In his *Essay on History*, Emerson remarks: "What a range of meanings and what perpetual pertinence has the story of Prometheus." Its inexhaustible character and continued fascination remind us that the unbinding of the Titan is likely to remain a central problem for humanity. As long as we are bound by the conditions of our human existence, Montaigne's reflection is certain to be confirmed when he remarks that "the gods sell us all the goods they give us: that is, they give us not one pure and perfect, and which we buy not with some evil."[64] Nevertheless, by these same conditions, we are compelled to seek for release from the long condemnation. As was suggested at the beginning of this paper, there are times in human history when the problem of civilization confronts us with a

[59]H. J. Laski, *Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (New York, 1943), 4.
[60]Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution* (New York, 1932), vol. I, 71.
[61]Julian Huxley, *Man Stands Alone* (New York, 1941), 297.
[62]Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (London, 1936), 131.
[63]See Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York, 1941).
[64]Montaigne, *Essayes*, The Seconde Booke, "We Taste Nothing Purely," chap. xx (Florio's translation).

certain critical urgency. While it may be impossible to estimate with full knowledge the essential meaning of contemporary events, it is difficult to evade the feeling of destiny in current affairs. We have arrived at one of those stages in the history of civilization when we must seek with grim earnestness for some new creative insight and energy in the midst of our common existence. This condition is not new. Long ago, in the midst of a similar experience, an ancient philosopher wrote of the *taedium vitae* when "he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."[65]

The enemy of our peace is neither science nor its technical applications. There is no escape to be found in a retreat to Ghandi's world of the spinning wheel and goat's milk. Time is irreversible, and even if we could endeavour to bring back some age of primaeval simplicity, its fabled gold would soon reveal itself as nothing more substantial than a tinsel wrapping of our own imagination. Dorothy Wellesley cries out in bitterness of heart:

> The great stone hearth has gone,
> An oblong electric tube is set on the wall
> Like a cheap jewel.
> Men converge no more to the fire,
> Men are one with the isolation:
> The pride of science stands, and the final desolation.[66]

But he that increaseth knowledge may also increase joy; only, however, if knowledge extends far enough to embrace not alone our environment but also ourselves. Rather, there is deep need for an immediate questing after an ancient knowledge that nevertheless, must constantly renew its power in human life—a reconciliation with the Divine Source of being, on which both man and his environment are dependent creatures.

Both Aeschylus and Shelley suggest that we can commit our hope for man's release to the long-drawn processes of time. History is thus a fulfilment of Aristotle's doctrine of tragedy wherein the very experience of suffering provides its own cleansing of the spirit. But time is a form of experience that points, as Plato and Bergson remind us, beyond itself to a realm of being that imparts reality and value to the succession of events. Time and mechanism travel together as categories of the understanding and they have an essential place in the onward movement of life, both individual and cosmic. But they are not final and are intended to be servants of purpose, which indeed alone gives them meaning. And purpose can become both freedom and hope when man acknowledges himself also as a servant with a mastery that is delegated and to be held in trust not for his own pride but for what the language of religious faith describes as the greater glory of God. "Machinery will find its true vocation again," writes Bergson, "it will render services in proportion to its power, only if mankind which it has bowed still lower to the earth, can succeed through it in standing erect and looking heavenward."[67]

[65]Ecclesiastes, 1. 18. [66]Dorothy Wellesley, *Fire*.
[67]H. Bergson, *Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (New York, 1935), 268.

STEPHEN LEACOCK AS MAN OF LETTERS

G. G. Sedgewick

THE task of determining an author's "place" in literature is at best uncertain and thankless. It is hard enough when the subject is centuries old, and in the case of Stephen Leacock it is impossible: critics, especially Canadian critics, are still too close to him in place and time. For a reasonably assured "determination", we shall have to wait two or three decades. This inquiry, therefore, must be taken as experimental and completely "subjective", although it may often appear to speak with the authority of scribes; and since it has no pretension to such authority, it has been cast in a deliberately informal mode. What is more, I have only a fragmentary knowledge of Leacock's life and have had no access to a great deal of his uncollected writings. Consequently I cannot discuss his "psychology" or his "social consciousness", as it has been fashionable to do; nor should I be competent to discuss such things if the data were available to me. These confessions, I hope, will give sufficient warning about the nature of this piece. It may still be proper for a student of literature to consider Leacock's books in an old-fashioned way.

A formidable task awaits the critic who at some future date will attempt a "definitive" study of Leacock's writings. The quantity of those writings is enormous. Lacking an up-to-date bibliography, I do not know the exact number of his published books; but, quite apart from anthologies and the like, there must be forty of them. As for the fugitive material, its titles nearly fill the ample and valuable study which McGill bibliographers put out in 1935, and even they had to throw up their hands when they tried to list the syndicated articles. It is a fair guess that, if all Leacock's writings could be collected, they would fill twice forty volumes.

One fact, remarkable in itself, will perhaps make the critic's task less difficult. When Leacock's first book, *Elements of Political Science*, was published (1906), its author was thirty-seven years old; and the Leacock whom all the world knows, was forty-one when he presented himself bashfully (1910) to an audience larger than he had addressed before. (If you raise an eyebrow at "bashfully", consider the final item on the title-page of the Montreal edition of *Literary Lapses:* "Price 35 cents"!) By the time a writer is forty-one, his product can no longer be considered a tender button of the spring. Leacock did most of his growing before he appeared on the public stage, not as a professor but *in propria persona* as humorist. Our critic may have trouble in dealing with mass, but he need not worry much about "development."

Unhappily for him, the mass has an equally enormous variety. It is not easy to think of a subject that Leacock did not at least touch—or, more probably, touch off. No other Canadian writer has or has had anything

like his range of interests; and those interests, if not always profound, were certainly intelligent and hearty. For a long generation the English-speaking world was eager to listen to what he plentifully said about Dickens, Mark Twain, words, best-sellers, college life, Montreal, McGill, the British Empire, the present condition and the prospects of Canada, the home-town of his boyhood, and his drink, emphatically his drink. This is merely a random and irreverent list of things he liked best to talk or laugh about. It would be equally easy to document his interest in travels, geology, anthropology, theology, the theatre, detective yarns, fishing, the Bible (our ignorance of which he loved to play upon), the Latin classics, the literary underworld of "slicks" and "pulps." In short, not much to be found in books or in men was alien to him—except fanaticisms, particularly that of the prohibitionist. I for one am happy to leave the sorting-out of all this to the critic who has not yet written.

Much of Leacock's "serious" writing is outside the scope of this paper, but it is worth pausing over because it displays his fundamental temper more definitely than the popular books. I do not know what value historians now set on his earliest large publications, *Elements of Political Science* and *Lafontaine, Baldwin, Hincks*. Naturally these are not works of humour, though the second of the pair is sprinkled here and there with quotations like the following official self-portrait: "John by Divine Permission First Bishop of Toronto. . . ." One thing, however, can be said assuredly about both books: though they are not written in the familiar easy Leacock idiom, they are unlike many others of their kind in being written in the English language. From first to last, Leacock was a mortal foe of obfuscation. This enmity of his is dominantly characteristic. It may be true, as I have been told, that his histories of discovery, of the British Empire, of Canada, even of Montreal, are "popular" and "secondary"; it may be true that the economics of *My Discovery of the West*, for instance, is outmoded. But no one can deny that the man who wrote these books and others like them had the limited but necessary virtue of common-sense and that he expressed himself with clarity and moderation and *interest*. To one of his essays I should like to pay special tribute: *Our Heritage of Liberty* (1941), which is undoubtedly a final statement of his political creed. Though I disagree sharply with some of the doctrine of this essay, I commend it to you as a lucid and moving performance.

In one of his many serio-comic accounts of himself, he says he "belonged" to the Conservative party and the Church of England. These "belongings", if not taken in too partizan a sense, are very revealing of Leacock's usual temper and attitude of mind. (For fear of misunderstanding I had better hurry to say that I "belong" to neither of those organizations.) He approached everything that came in his way—except fanaticism—as a conservative would. The crusted tory he thought a fool and frequently said so: he was a reformer of the kind that lops off withered branches with due care for the life of the tree. And with what zest he took part in that sport,

whether he was attacking dry rot in education, in politics, in popular fashion, or in literature! At scriptural hint, he stood upon the traditional ways, believing that the right way ahead could best be observed from that position. In his case it is better to spell conservative, as I did above and do now, without a capital.

Obviously the same temper is suggested by "belonging to the Church of England." That church is traditionally a foe of what the eighteenth century scornfully called "enthusiasm." There is more than wit and humour and solemn bluff, there is personal revelation in the two texts with which Mariposa's clergyman assailed Josh Smith's saloon. (The texts, I warn you, are from the Scripture according to St. Stephen.) "The Rev. Dean Drone", writes Leacock in *Sunshine Sketches*, "led off with a sermon on—'Lord, be merciful even unto this publican, Matthew Six' "; while the Presbyterian minister inquired, "Lo, what now doeth Abiram in the land of Melchizedek, Kings Eight and Nine?" Clearly the Dean's congregation, among whom young Stephen must have been seated, might agree with their sectarian friends in general principle, but they would prefer modest and gentle sentiment to blasts from a belligerent ram's horn. Stephen was no covenanter: he had the temper of a magnified ordinary Canadian—of the sort, I mean, indicated by the terms anglican and conservative.

These points I have dwelt on for the reason assigned, and also because they suggest something that I shall labour all too hard: the fact that no schism existed as between Leacock the serious critic of affairs and Leacock the humorist. The latter personage I shall regard as the *Man of Letters*.

By far the larger body of Leacock's writings are humorous, as everyone knows, and on these rest whatever claims he may have to permanent value. In considering them, I shall brush aside, except at one point, the much-debated differences between humour and wit, parody and burlesque and satire; for they are not important in a short view of Leacock's humorous art. To subvert a celebrated saying of Wordsworth, the power by which we multiply such distinctions is not false but it is surely secondary. The vast majority of people who will read Leacock will remember him as humorist and wisely let it go at that. It was as humorist that he became famous overnight with the London publication of *Literary Lapses* in 1910. Just lately I picked up a straw of testimony to this sudden wind of fame. Cyril Connolly, writing of his English boyhood before the first world war, said he then "enjoyed Burnand, Mark Twain, and Stephen Leacock" and that he "wrote facetious little Leacockian sketches". All over the western world, boys have passed through the same experiences ever since. Perhaps the Montreal tycoon in Hugh McLennan's *Two Solitudes* was faintly remembering his sweet youth when he bracketed Ralph Connor and Stephen Leacock as worthy of commercial attention.

Not many men who create humour set themselves to analyse it. I have heard it argued that Leacock, who was both creator and analyst, revealed a limitation in being so, since an artist who can operate in the major function

should not waste time on the minor. There is a good deal of truth in that argument, but in spite of it no one regrets Leacock's two studies of humour: the larger one, *Humour: its theory and technique* (1934), and its condensation, *Humour and Humanity* (1938). The first it is amusing to regard as Leacock's second doctoral dissertation, the only entertaining specimen ever published in that dismal kind. The second is less diffuse and more usable, and to it I shall be referring later on. With these two books may be grouped the biographies of Dickens (1933) and Mark Twain (1932), two authors whose work excited Leacock almost to an "enthusiasm". Of Dickens he made a demonstrable assertion: "I know my Dickens as a Scottish divine knows his Bible". Any reader who wants proof of that boast will find it in one of the most effective pieces Leacock ever wrote: "Fiction and Reality, A Study of the Art of Charles Dickens" (*Essays and Literary Studies*, 1916)—a fantasy in which some famous Dickens characters re-appear, as if called up by the master himself, and talk with nearly alarming reality. Of Mark Twain it is enough to say that he runs a close second to Dickens in the biographer's affection. The two books just mentioned, engaging as they are, have no great critical importance; but they do show where Leacock would have "placed" himself in the literary tradition.

Lastly, there is the long close-packed succession of "funny pieces" which gave Leacock his name and on which his reputation mainly rests. They are gathered together in twenty volumes or are still unsummoned from the four quarters of the earth. At one time or another they take a shy at almost everything under the sun.

But neither size of output nor wealth of interest is enough, of itself, to guarantee permanence. A short time ago there appeared in an American paper a question and an answer that are disturbingly pertinent: "Who are the Canadian writers whose names are known to American readers? Robert W. Service, Bliss Carman, Ralph Connor, Stephen Leacock, Mazo de la Roche—the roll is quickly called and *none can truly be named as an important writer.*" (Italics mine.) Such is the judgment of a columnist in the *New York Times*. You are not compelled to regard it as final or even weighty; if you like, you may put against it A. P. Herbert's opinion that "he [Leacock] is the greatest humorist of the age"—though that praise is itself ambiguous. But any one, who is making an estimate of Stephen Leacock must view the columnist's assemblage of names as a bad omen. Undoubtedly all those authors have been, and still are, widely read outside Canada. But the best of them, Bliss Carman and Mazo de la Roche, are undeniably minor in their own areas; and, considered as creative artists, Service and Connor are surely minimal. Does Leacock belong in that galley? Most decidedly I think not. But just how and where is he to be "placed"?

Unhappily, questions like that have no exact and final answer. It is not possible to draw a distinct dividing line between minor and major, important and unimportant; or rather, every human being draws it in a

different place. At its worst, the question is frivolous or pedantic. Literature cannot be graded from A to F as if by a school examiner. But, unhappily again, we are all unreasonable enough to arrange some sort of sliding scale in our own private judgments. And most of the wise people whom I know, if compelled under threat to fit Leacock on a scale of values as humorist, are not able to give him A, although granting that he may be "the greatest humorist of the age." Not claiming wisdom, I definitely agree with my betters.

To my own mind a sort of tentative grading is suggested by the one occasion when I met Leacock personally. It was a small luncheon party at which he was Honoured Guest. The hostess was the calm and assured *grande dame* of the community, who knew how to play up to Leacock as he knew how to play up to her; and the game was quietly delightful. There was no trace, in the guest's behaviour, of Stevenson's affable celebrity life-size. He was both himself and his part, unobtrusively opposing to the lady's elegance his storeclothes, his comic mask of a face, his off-hand pose of village illiteracy—I could not swear to it, but it sticks in my memory that he kept saying "ain't". "Pose" is an unfortunate word to use there, if it suggests laborious insincerity, for everything he said and did was like nature itself. It was as if he invited and expected everybody to be at ease, as indeed everyone was. Such is the manner which, in some unexplainable way, he passed on to his writing. His humour may not be profound or wise, but there can be no doubt of its infectious heartiness and its man-of-the-world ease. If a Canadian worries about "importance", he need not feel nervous at seeing his fellow-countryman at table with the incontestably Important, as he might if he saw Ralph Connor in the company of Thackeray, or Miss de la Roche in the company of Miss Jane Austen. Certainly Stephen Leacock would feel no nervousness himself. He is not one of the Great Ones, but he may sit at the same table.

Nevertheless it is a rather melancholy experience to re-read Peter McArthur's anthology of Leacock's humour, published (1923) in *Makers of Canadian Literature*. I take an anthology—any one of them would do—because it represents an intelligent man's judgment of what is best in the material; and by 1923 Leacock had published many of the things for which he is famous. These pieces, which were fresh and gay thirty years ago, are not wearing well; some of them have faded altogether. The hackneyed "Boarding-House Geometry" was never more than sophomoric stuff, to be laughed at just once; and Hezekiah Hayloft has become a boisterous bore. Mr. B. K. Sandwell promises to be very sorry for anyone who is no longer amused at these things, but the challenge implicit in his pity may be a sign that he feels the basis of his own amusement to be unsteady. From *Literary Lapses* (1910) and *Nonsense Novels* (1911) to *My Remarkable Uncle* (1942) Leacock kept spraying the world with "funny pieces" that were like dew upon the mown grass: for the most of that period, indeed, the well-worn figure is pretty near to being literal truth of history. But

the spray, when it is turned on now, is losing energy. This is very far from being a condemnation of Leacock's humorous writing: for his purposes were exactly the same as his effects. He wrote for the moment, as all men do or have ever done, even when, as with Horace and the Elizabethan sonneteers, their hope of immortality is sure and certain. I know of no evidence that Leacock had any such hope. There are good books for the time and good books for all time, as Ruskin announced in oracular Victorian fashion. As between the two, Leacock would have no hesitation in choosing his own "place", and he could do so with satisfaction and pride.

Support for these opinions can be found in an anthology of Leacock's own making: *Greatest Pages of American Humour* (1936). In his admirable running comment he acknowledges that many of the "pages" are badly faded. Captain Crockett, Josh Billings and Bill Nye are important to a historian of humour, but to no one of a later day who reads for fun. Another example that Leacock chooses, Mr. Robert Benchley's recent burlesque of Shakespearean scholarship, is already getting as dusty as the thing it mocks. Even the extracts from the very lively *New Yorker* are like Laertes' violet—the perfume and suppliance of a minute. True, Leacock reprints *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, a fable of Uncle Remus, and a page or two from *Huckleberry Finn*. But none of these things is primarily humorous—their humour is a sort of miraculous bye-product.

Here, then, is a principle that divides the greatest humour from the lesser. Humour, when it is Greatest, alights upon some created structure like a will o' the wisp or glows through a surface like the lustre of an oriental vase; or else, it is only one part of a larger design. It is, I repeat, a bye-product of a whole creative effort; conversely, it is not the chief end which the creator had in view. This principle is too obvious, really, to require exemplification. But if this is called for, let The Canterbury Tales be witness, or Bottom the Weaver and Falstaff, or *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. More relevant to the present purpose is the best humour of Dickens and Mark Twain. The funny people whom Dickens created in such number all have substance underlying the accident of humour. One brief and memorable instance: "But the words she spoke of Mrs. Harris, lambs could not forgive—No, Betsy! . . . nor worms forget!" This is a mighty utterance in itself, but it gets most of its momentum from that natural force known as Sairey Gamp. And the excerpt from *Huckleberry Finn* which Leacock prints in *Greatest Pages of American Humour* is not primarily a humorous piece at all. I fancy that he quotes it because embedded in it is the superb and utterly characteristic myth which Jim spins out of his creative imagination: "Jim said the moon could 'a *laid* [the stars]; well, that looked kind of reasonable, so I didn't say nothing against it, because I've seen a frog lay most as many, so of course it could be done. We used to watch the stars that fell, too, and see them streak down. Jim allowed they'd got spoiled and was hove out of the

nest." This is Great Humour, and it is great precisely because it falls like manna on the whole scheme of the book.

Of this classic kind, issuing from structure and character, Leacock has very little. His best approach to it is in *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town* (1912). In several other books there is a sort of structure, as in *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich* (1914), but it is manufacture not creation; and in the calamity called *The Hohenzollerns in America* (1919), humour degenerates into pure Ersatz. With all his immense popularity, none of his characters and, with one exception, none of his general schemes have got fixed in men's minds firmly enough to become common property of speech. His own name is a part of a household's equipment, and that is saying much; but, with one probable exception, none of the names he made is endowed with permanent energy. Leacock's imagination was not powerfully creative. It worked in fits and starts, in short pieces that have an immediate and notable value as journalism, but not too much more. And like all journalism, even the very best (as his undoubtedly was), these pieces are liable to fade the farther we move away from their own special moments.

This also means that the Man of Letters, like the Publicist, is a Canadian conservative. He lacks the central and informing *passion* which produces the great form of humour emanating, to use Leacock's own distinctions, from character and dramatic situation. He cannot be held responsible for the deficiency, which must be charged to the general Laodiceanism of Canadian life. As a people, we have been afraid of passion, not because it is tasteless like "enthusiasm" but because it is uncomfortable. The fear is wise if peace and propriety are the chief ends of man, but it is crippling to all forms of art, humorous art among them. Possibly we have been brought up to associate passion with romantic excess (which, by the way, explodes under a humorous touch); but the energy that issued in the classic fun of the Nun's Priest's Tale, not to speak of Tom Sawyer, is anything but Laodicean and nothing if not *passionate*. Now that is the last word one would apply, or wish to apply, to *Nonsense Novels* or *Moonbeams from the Larger Lunacy*. These books are gaily funny, of course, but their humour is on a far lower level.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find a defect in Leacock's theory of humour as presented in the two studies already referred to. The more concise and characteristic of the pair is *Humour and Humanity*, which I have now in mind. Nothing particularly new will be found in Leacock's treatment of the subject, although he has some sharp and amusing things to say about previous theory, particularly that of the philosophers. Like everybody else, he finds that humour arises from a perception of "incongruity"; and he shows how that appears, in various forms, in language, character, situation and so on. If he had not been so averse to appearing philosophic, he might have done more to relate incongruity to the ancient clash between Appearance and Reality. But that is by the way. What is

significant in his views is not their matter but his emphasis. Reviewing the long history of the humorous, he finds that it has been tending more and more in the direction of sympathy and kindliness. He finds himself compelled to shiver, for example, as he hears Talleyrand deliver himself of one of his acid aphorisms. And he finds dictionary support for his general conclusion: humour is "playfulness, pleasantry", says Webster, ". . . distinguished from wit as less purely intellectual and having more kindly sympathy." Leacock never tires of ringing changes on ideas like those and he comes back to them the more frequently as he grows older. Three of his mellowest and most charming essays appear as "Studies in Humour" in *My Remarkable Uncle* of 1942. I quote from one of them, written under the shadow of war: "In the world of today humour lives only with human kindliness and human freedom. It is only now when we are in danger of losing our good old democracy that we can see how fine it is and how individual character responds to it. . . . Democracy was everywhere permeated with humanity and humour was the very atmosphere of its life."

With this pleasant and solacing doctrine everybody will be glad to agree if allowed to make some rather large reservations. As I have said, I insist on regarding distinctions between wit, humour, satire etc. as at present unimportant and irrelevant. You have noticed how guarded Webster is: "*less* purely intellectual", "*more* kindly sympathy." Let me grant that distinctions do exist and at the same time make one blunt assertion of dismissal which may serve as specimen of many: wherever there is wit, there is also humour.

If Leacock's history and theory are valid and complete, it is hard to see how he can now, in this kindlier age, avoid denying humour to satire, even though very many of his own pieces, obviously intended and taken as humorous, are themselves satiric. There have been people, I am told, who have maintained that satire and humour are two quite different things. But their doctrine is surely mistaken, if not absurd. What do they do with Macflecknoe, Gulliver, *The Vision of Judgment*, *Brave New World?* Or, to take a very extreme case, with the *Modest Proposal?* Or again, to come close home to Leacock, with the *Connecticut Yankee?* Incongruity is the basis of all these satiric examples, and they certainly excite justifiable and civilized laughter. Is it not remarkable that Leacock rarely mentions such masterpieces with any degree of pleasure?—Some of them, indeed, evidently revolt him. This strikes me as evidence that his theory, if pushed to its conclusions, is inadequate and tender-minded, not to say ethically enervating. It would be an unhappy event if humour were ever forbidden to turn its searchlight on evil or were denied its name when it did so. And for the health of our life we had better not put a ban on "grim humour" or even "savage humour" as being dangerous contradictions in thought and practice. Neither life nor literature can do without Lear's Fool.

Once more we must charge something against the general Canadian temper, at least of the past. I have pressed this point irritatingly, but it

is hard to avoid doing so except at cost of mere complaisance. Canadian conservatism—I would say anglicanism if I dared—has hated satire unless it played on the surface of things and deliberately evaded issues that are fundamental. For that matter, it has not been any too tolerant—in its books, that is—of anything that is symbolized by the name of Rabelais; and one must admit Gargantua would be a nuisance in a comfortable house. The point is that, though Gulliver and Gargantua are not nice fellows, they do very much "belong" to life; and views of life that are commoner and sunnier than Hardy's meliorism should take a look at the worst. Perhaps Leacock's failure to take that look enables a columnist to call him unimportant.

But the columnist is wrong. Leacock's "importance" may not be of the first rank, but it unmistakably exists. Some of it, perhaps, belongs to Canada alone; but, as his fame testifies, not all. For one thing, he created a manner of his own—a manner which is recognizable as distinct from any other, the "Leacockian vein." Meeting him only once was enough to prove that in him style and man were one. The style was consciously undistinguished, slippered, loose-buttoned, the very original of the fireside chat. He *talked* to a world. And the talk was good: nothing of oppressive monologue in it, furnished with abundance if not depth of interest and idea. Besides, a listener always knew precisely what he was saying: his talk was invariably straightforward, unpretentious, vivifying. And if anything devious or swollen or boresome came near, he could be depended on to laugh it out of the house. I have heard him insulted with the charge that he entertained his vast company with "good clean fun"—a phrase which always raises as much doubt as advertisements inviting you to "nice clean rooms." The right, and very different, thing to say is that for a generation he entertained a world with intelligence or, what is better, with pure foolishness. During these last thirty years it has been important as never before to have laughter sometimes resounding in what Goldsmith enviously called the vacant mind. The jokes that I remember are mostly the very foolish sort, but they continue to keep me wholesomely amused. I like to hear him speak of laughter (he did so twice) as belonging to bishops, archbishops, chimpanzees and other primates. Being a teacher, I am tickled to hear him touch off "broad general education": "Her aunt had carefully instructed her in Christian principles. She had also taught her Mohammedanism to make sure." And every lecturer has a fellow-feeling for Leacock at hearing he was "interviewed twenty times, sixteen times by men and twice by women." *Dulce est desipere.*

Civilizing influences are not common enough to be airily dismissed. The literary lapses and nonsense novels were something more than merely funny; they exposed commercialized taste and feeling, and all kinds of paid pretenses to thought. People, particularly young people, who read them still get some measure of immunity from prevalent bad romance and worse psychology. From such pests as these, laughter is a far better defence

than any amount of direct instruction—a truism which becomes bitter wisdom to a college professor whose mind has been "very seriously damaged by his perpetual contact with the students." Apparently, however, such disasters did not happen at McGill. At any rate the tastes of Leacock's students (i.e. his readers) have not been seriously damaged by contact with their professor. As he himself hoped, he has acted "as a leaven on the lump of commercialism that sits so heavily on the world today."

For Canadians particularly, though others are not excluded from the benefit, it has been important to have as their own instructor an accomplished citizen of the world. In my belief Leacock has done a good deal to mitigate our provincialism. His home was in Montreal, but he was at home in New York and London; he was graduate of Toronto and Chicago, and he adorned Oxford with a famous compliment; his humour was at once of *The New Yorker* and of *Punch;* and with his interests, as we have seen, he girdled the earth like a second Puck. He is the first and only Canadian man of letters whom responsible judgment has reckoned the greatest of his kind. To Canadians this has been more than a pride, it has been a liberal education.

If all the rest of Leacock's books wither, one I think will keep on blossoming: *Sunshine Sketches of a Little Town.* There was a time when I regretted "Sunshine" as being sentimental, but that was a mistake. Leacock would have blundered badly if he had darkened his Mariposa with the shadows of Winesburg and Middletown. He wisely left those shadows to the imagination of some one else. As it is, that town lives neatly complete in memory and imagination, and its name has become a symbol of experiences through which a nation has passed and upon which its present life is founded. Like millions of Canadians I too have lived in Mariposa. I know the Rev. Dean Drone and Josh Smith and Mr. Pupkin and John Henry Bagshaw. Into the making of the place and its people Leacock put a genuine creative passion, and on the shapes so made great humour alighted. These sketches build up a sort of national myth—and what good is the nation which lacks that?

TREATY REVISION AND REVISIONISM

SIR GEOFFREY KNOX

THE idea that a treaty of peace must be subject to revision, which was introduced in the Covenant of the League of Nations and eagerly canvassed in the period between the two wars, has been brought up again at San Francisco and more will certainly be heard of it before the Peace Conferences begin. It may therefore be worth while to look back at how the experiment of 1919 fared in practice and how the principle of revision was exploited for ends which its authors and advocates had not foreseen.

I

Article XIX of the Covenant laid down: "The Assembly may from time to time advise the reconsideration by members of the League of treaties which have become inapplicable and the consideration of conditions whose continuance might endanger the peace of the world." This appeared innocuous enough—the application of a principle which no normal man would think of challenging; but it was evidently intended to go somewhat further, since the Allied and Associated Powers in their reply to the German Delegation's comments on the Treaty of Versailles stated: "It [the Treaty] creates the machinery for the adjustment of all international problems by discussion and consent, whereby the settlement of 1919 itself can be modified from time to time to suit new facts and new conditions as they arise." This was meant no doubt to cover such modifications as those already provided for in the Reparations Section in connection with Germany's "capacity to pay," and other clauses of the Treaty of which the usefulness might lapse owing to unforeseen circumstances or which experience might show to be unpractical, thus allowing the Powers to make the necessary readjustments without undermining the Treaty as a whole. It is not to be believed that a body of responsible statesmen, with competent advisers at their elbow, deliberately decided to open to revision the more important provisions designed to serve the essential purpose of the war and the Treaty—to prevent Germany from again plunging the world into disaster. However far some of the treaty-makers may afterwards have strayed from this first principle, the whole tenor of their reply to the German Delegation yet shows that up to the time of signature they still appreciated that this was their chief aim.

That Article XIX was not intended to apply to national frontiers is sufficiently shown by Article X: "The members of the League of Nations undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all members of the League." This Article was the corner-stone of the League; few, if any, countries would have signed its statutes, and certainly not Great

Britain or the United States, if they had thought they were giving that institution the right to press them to alter their national frontiers, and none of the smaller Powers would have seen any advantage in a League which did not assure their territorial integrity. It is thus evident, in spite of the enormous volume of propaganda to the contrary, that the first duty of the League was to maintain the territorial *status quo* resulting from the treaties, which after all was the only sure foundation for a lasting peace, seeing that stability and security from aggression and encroachment alone make possible, in the stage of corporate international life to which we have yet attained, the long-range planning essential for the peaceful and prosperous development of all nations. This consideration unfortunately was not appreciated at its proper value by the public opinion of Great Britain, the Dominions, or the United States, which did not have to live under the menace of exposed land frontiers. If, like so many other nations, they had felt their own borders threatened with encroachment or attack, many of their spokesmen would have shown after the war less of that idealism which is most readily displayed in other people's affairs, and more sense of reality.

In practice the Assembly of the League never advised the reconsideration of any provision of the peace treaties, nor was Article XIX invoked by one of the defeated Powers. It was however invoked in connection with earlier treaties by Bolivia in 1920 and by China in 1925 and 1929. Bolivia's application was shown in the report of a Committee of Jurists to be defective in form; it was withdrawn and not renewed. The Chinese claim aimed somewhat deviously at revision of the treaties granting extra-territorial and other rights to certain Powers; both applications ended in anodyne resolutions by the Assembly. No doubt the Chinese Delegation would have found it difficult, if not impossible, to show that the treaties had become inapplicable or that new facts had supervened. Furthermore, with one of the principal parties to these treaties, the United States, not a member of the League, and with China in the state of anarchy in which she then found herself, it was most unlikely that the Treaty Powers would have agreed to discuss the renunciation of the rights of protection of their nationals which they lawfully enjoyed, or that reasonable men would have held that there was then a case in equity for revision. It is significant that, now that new facts have supervened and China has given good promise of unity and orderly government, Great Britain and the United States have, without any procedure of revision, spontaneously resigned their special rights.

II

Such is the brief and uneventful history of treaty revision as it was provided for in the Covenant; that of the "revisionism" which it inspired is more substantial and instructive. That Germany never made use of Article XIX is not surprising; she found she could better exploit it by not

invoking it. Her real rulers, comparing the terms imposed on her with their own conception of a peace treaty (as demonstrated at Brest Litovsk and Bucharest) ascribed their mildness to a wave of sentimentality which had invaded the Anglo-Saxon countries and instilled into many of their statesmen the belief that by tempering the wind to a defeated but unrepentant aggressor they could encourage him to become a peaceful citizen. The German militarists appreciated that, if they could keep these peoples who then greatly outweighed the rest of the world in military and financial power in the same frame of mind, they would have secured their first objective, the opportunity to prepare their next war in conditions offering good hope of success; so, judging that half a century of mass advertisement had made the average Anglo-Saxon particularly susceptible to a propaganda presented with unrelenting emphasis and iteration, they set about conditioning him with all the artifice of the advertiser and all the resources of a still powerful nation.

Among the factors making for the success of this method was the natural illusion of the great maritime and mercantile Powers that once the enemy's naval strength had been extinguished they had nothing more to fear and so could safely undertake the rehabilitation of a good customer. The equally natural reluctance of their European Allies to share this optimism only exasperated their impatience to get back to business and made them more receptive to German ideas. There was also the fundamental fact that Prussia's long series of aggressive wars had not been aimed at them, so that they had no direct experience of her methods, while the venerable tradition of more than a century of Prussian alliances and a common bond of Protestantism had inevitably led English historians and other formers of opinion to show Prussia and her conception of German unity in a flattering and deceptive light. Many too were impressed by Germany's claim to be a bulwark against communism. On the psychological side, the reaction from war and its insipid diet of home-made propaganda lent the charm of novelty to the enemy's point of view and gave unlimited opportunities for the display of magnanimity—a virtue to which few are indiscreet enough to apply the acid test of whether it is to be exercised at one's own or one's neighbour's expense. Thus great numbers in the satisfaction of showing themselves charitable to their enemies lost sight of their friends' interests, and ultimately of their own.

In Germany's conditioning process Article XIX was held up as the one good point in an otherwise iniquitous treaty. It was presented as imposing on the victorious Powers an obligation to remedy her grievances, which they would no doubt do their utmost to evade. This theme had great success, and Germany was careful not to break the spell by invoking the revision procedure of the League, which would only have recalled what its real scope and purpose were and illuminated the weakness of her claims. Instead she found it better, without seeking relief, to cry to heaven against an entirely imaginary denial of justice. In some cases she had further

reasons for not invoking Article XIX. For instance, the only one of her territorial claims that would not have run counter to the respect for national frontiers prescribed by the Covenant, was that for the return of the Colonies which were under Mandate. No doubt she would have been hard put to it to show that the treaty had become inapplicable or that new facts had supervened; but that was not the main deterrent: she refrained from raising the question of the Colonies just as she left it and that of equality of naval armaments out of her general propaganda, because the last thing she wanted was to oblige the members of the British Commonwealth to look into the facts and so arouse suspicions of her real aims.

Following this line, the Germans hammered home with unremitting insistence the claim that it was contrary to the spirit of the Covenant to maintain the territorial settlement created by the treaty of which it was itself a part. This curious thesis backed by those persuasive arguments, emphasis and iteration, soon took a firm hold on a great part of Anglo-Saxon opinion, and the catchwords, "peaceful change" and "dynamism"—adaptations for queasier stomachs of the pan-German's *Lebensraum* and *Herrenvolk*—struck root and became for many the pure doctrine of policy. These, unfortunately, in their theoretical appreciations overlooked the all-important practical background to Germany's claims, the preparation of the next war. The treaty-makers in reconstituting Poland and Bohemia had sought not only to right historic wrongs, but to create a barrier which, with the disarmament of Germany and the demilitarization of the Rhineland, would secure their essential object, to prevent a people with a record of two centuries of aggression and rapine from again making a shambles of Europe. Germany for her part knew well that it was only expansion to the east and south that could give her the resources and the strategic elbow-room to allow of an eventual attack in the west, and that the way to this was closed by a resurrected Poland, a newly created Czecho-Slovakia, and an Austria banned from union with the Reich. But this barrier had its evident weaknesses; without the Corridor Poland could not live, and with Austria in hostile hands Czecho-Slovakia could not be defended; a revision of either of these points in Germany's favour would bring down the whole edifice of the peace. Her revisionism therefore aimed above all at building up her armed forces and undermining these three pillars of the territorial settlement. This was the real object of Germany's campaign for "peaceful change" which won such warm support. We shall be wise this time to insist that peaceful stability be attained before there can be any question of peaceful change, and that "dynamism" be finally consigned to the limbo of forgotten fascist slogans. It is not dynamic nationalism that the world requires, but its opposite, international harmony.

Meanwhile, as Germany's clamours grew, the Allies were undertaking by normal diplomatic means much practical revision of the Treaty, some of it in the hope, always doomed to disappointment, of creating friendlier relations with her, but more of it inspired by the eagerness of politicians

to pander to that strange sentimental hysteria that had been generated by German propaganda playing on popular ignorance of the facts and the issues involved—an ignorance which most unfortunately governments did nothing to dispel. Thus from an early date Reparations were submitted to frequent revisions which whittled them down and finally extinguished them just at the moment when Germany needed all the foreign exchange and barter power she could get together to supply her massive rearmament. Military Control was first weakened and then prematurely withdrawn, and one of the weightiest of the Military Clauses, Article 177 prohibiting the "private armies", was never enforced, in spite of incessant and open provocation. When it came to Germany's entry into the League, the conditions laid down in the Covenant and elaborated in the Note to the German Delegation at Versailles were eluded*, and she was juggled into her seat on the Council without any affirmation of respect for her international obligations—a procedure well designed to bring the League into contempt, particularly in the eyes of its new member. The occupied Rhineland too, the corner-stone of the defence of Europe, was abandoned in 1930, five years in advance of the date set by the Treaty. (That Germany was able to secure these alleviations by means of a propaganda that was then having its full effect only in Anglo-Saxon and Nordic countries is to be explained by the fact that France, who, it must be admitted today, was the only Great Power to show a sense of reality and responsibility in the general light-headedness that followed the war, was dependent on the Anglo-Saxon Powers for her security. She was acutely conscious of this but also realized that the concessions which she was obliged to make in order to retain what she could of their good will were sapping that security.)

These concessions which already passed the bounds of reasonable prudence only served to whet Germany's appetite, and her efforts to re-arm and to upset the territorial settlement were redoubled. As soon as the Treaty came into force the propaganda cry had been raised that the Polish Corridor constituted an intolerable hardship which must be removed. The Corridor had been in fact an integral part of Poland up to the time of the First Partition, that wrong which it was a declared aim of the Treaty to repair, and was indispensable for the country's continued existence, whereas the inconveniences it caused for Germany were small. And yet the clamour grew and spread until 1934 when, on Germany's concluding an agreement with Poland which left the question of the Corridor *in situ*, the agitation ceased abruptly and Hitler was able to announce somewhat disconcertingly for Germany's innumerable propagandists abroad, that naturally a nation of thirty five millions must have assured access to the sea. In early days there had also been some propaganda for the union of

*"Any State whose government shall have given clear proofs of its stability as well as of its intention to observe its international obligations—particularly those obligations which arise out of the Treaty of Peace—will find the Principal Allied and Associated Powers disposed to support its candidature for admission to the League."

Austria with the Reich. (The claim here was no stronger; Austria had never been enamoured of Bismark's Reich, and there was no blood relationship between the Austrian and the Prussian who for two centuries had been his bitterest enemy.) So long as political elections continued to be held in Germany the German Nationalists did not press for the incorporation of Austria because it would have meant an increase of the Catholic and Socialist votes in the Reich. The question was first seriously raised from the German side when Brüning's government attempted in 1931 to create a Customs Union of the two countries and present the Western Powers with the accomplished fact. But for once the Powers stood firm, and the *Zollverein* was dropped. As soon, however, as Hitler had been put in power and no more elections were to be feared the propaganda bombardment opened, followed in 1934 by organized gangsterism culminating in Dollfuss' murder and, once the re-militarized Rhineland had been fortified and Germany's flank was secure, by the overt rape of Austria.

Germany's claim to the Sudetenland was no better founded than that to Austria. It had no more justification, ethnographic or historical, than if she had demanded the German-speaking Cantons of Switzerland, or France the French-speaking districts outside her frontiers. And yet great numbers of educated people, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon world, influenced by the eternal refrain that revision of the treaties was due to Germany, lent their voices for years to the support of her claims and urged that her pretensions should be satisfied. It was this steady softening up of the public sense of reality and justice that in the end made a "Munich" possible and acceptable. History will certainly recognize that the encouragement thus given to the German militarists in their revisionism was one of the main factors that allowed them to organize the present war. It enabled them to get the still hesitant part of the masses behind them by saying, "You see the Anglo-Saxon world is with us"; and it created in their own minds the conviction that Anglo-Saxon opinion, if sufficiently drugged with propaganda, would never see through their designs, but allow them to build up their military strength undisturbed in order first to dominate Europe piecemeal and then to turn on the Anglo-Saxons.

In South Eastern Europe revisionism followed a different but likewise unfortunate course. The Allies did not, as propaganda has maintained, break up the Austro-Hungarian Empire: it dissolved of its own accord. For many years before 1914 it had been an axiom of European politics that the Empire was held together only by the personal prestige of the old Emperor and that with his death this rickety confusion of peoples and tongues would fall apart. As things turned out the cement of war kept it precariously whole for a moment after his death, but when defeat became inevitable it fell to pieces. It was impossible for the treaty-makers to pick up the bits and patch them together again; they could do no more than register the fact. Austria shorn of her alien possessions was left a poor, top-heavy, rural state supporting an immense capital city. Under the first

shock of ceasing to be a Great Power, with the economic future bleak, and in the belief, very soon to be belied, that German socialism after its early triumph would overcome Prussianism, she made some attempt to obtain revision of the interdict on the *Anschluss*, and renewed it once or twice later when the financial situation of the Reich appeared brilliant in comparison with her own; but in general among the Austrian people there was little wish to be merged in a Reich dominated by the Prussians, the race most foreign to their easy-going character, and there was never any settled trend of revisionism.

Hungary on the other hand having, in the break-up of the Dual Monarchy, secured her independence of foreign sovereignty for the first time since the extinction of the mediaeval kingdom at the battle of Mohacs in 1526, instead of consolidating this late won liberty, concentrated every effort on treaty revision in order to bring again under her crown those Magyars who had remained outside her new borders and also as many as possible of the Slovaks, Jugo-Slavs and Rumanians who had been her former "subject peoples." Her revisionism was preached even more blatantly than that of Germany, but there was in some of Hungary's minor claims an element of equity that was lacking in Germany's. Her frontiers were not at all points the result of orderly treaty planning, but here and there the outcome of haphazard *force majeure*. It is conceivable that if Hungary had confined herself to claims for rectification in these cases, and if they had been put forward with reasonable discretion, something might have been done to meet them, but it is certain that no statesman in his senses, and particularly no government of a neighbouring state, would have opened the door to the band-wagon of Hungarian revisionism and the fantastic claims that were shouted from it.

After the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire the only hope of maintaining stability in those regions which by their parcelling out offered a dangerous vacuum to the south and south-east of Germany, was to build up gradually a federation of the Danubian States, beginning by tariff adjustments and concessions throughout the area and developing later into an economic and eventually a political union. There were of course many obstacles: Jugo-Slavia and in a lesser degree Czecho-Slovakia dreaded a Hapsburg restoration for the disruptive effect that it might have on their own internal structure, and they feared that steps towards federation might bring about a restoration. There was a feeling too among the new states that their capitals would lose any importance or economic independence they had been able to win, if drawn back into the orbit of Vienna, and that they would drift into the status of poor relations. But with patience and statesmanship these difficulties might have been overcome; the barrier that made any progress towards federation impossible was Hungary's revisionism and the circle of hatred and distrust that it sowed round her.

III

It is not easy to imagine why it was thought necessary to graft the principle of revision onto a treaty of peace of which the essential object was to prevent a people with a record of two centuries of armed aggression from continuing the practice. But, whatever the reason, it seems self-evident that to imply to a defeated enemy that the terms imposed on him may be modified to his advantage must encourage in him false hopes, agitation, and discontent, and provoke in the countries at whose expense revision might be undertaken a feeling of insecurity and counter-agitation; whereas if the treaty is imposed with firmness and without equivocation, particularly on a people so disciplined as the Germans and so instinctively obedient to authoritative command, there is a good prospect that they will bow to the inevitable—that surest of reconcilers—and settle down. After all in civil life we do not say: "Here is your contract; if you find its terms inconvenient or if you think you can get something better out of me, all you have to do is to make a noise about it and the Courts will change it for you." We are far from the level of mutual trust that would allow us to conduct our daily business between fellow citizens on such a basis, much less between states. There are also other dangers of a psychological order inherent in the principle of revision. For instance, in the case of multilateral treaties with a common enemy it will always happen that for geographic or other reasons the needs of one of the parties are satisfied before those of the rest; and, if the treaty is open to revision, there is a great temptation for the satisfied party to take what he imagines to be the easy road to reconciliation by helping his late enemy to win back something on the still unsatisfied claims of his late allies—a course of conduct which must in the long run undermine international confidence.

The principle of revision also gave opportunities to the fishers in troubled waters. The classic case is the "Four Power Pact," a device of Mussolini's whereby Germany, and incidentally of course Italy, were to be "compensated" at the expense of the smaller Powers. Unwary men walked into the trap with the result that a serious distrust of the Western Powers was born, which was instrumental in leading Poland to conclude her pact with Germany and set others wondering whether the safest course was not to compound with the future aggressor. Events too have demonstrated that insistence on the idea of revision weakens that general respect for the pledged word which before 1914 was a real force in the life of nations. From 1926 onwards there was an ever more patent disregard of international engagements, which progressed logically from the smuggling of Germany into the League, with assent to her tacit repudiation of the Treaty of Versailles, to the unopposed violation of the Treaty of Locarno and the rapes of Austria and Czecho-Slovakia. The task this time, let us hope, will be not to weaken but to reinforce respect for the international contract and to bring good faith again into repute.

On the practical side also revision offers many difficulties. Even the apparently anodyne method of Article XIX, by which the Assembly could recommend to a member the reconsideration of a treaty, is less innocuous than it looks. Questions between states which might easily be settled in the course of diplomacy take on a different appearance when a public procedure is invoked; this inevitably stiffens the temper of both parties and cuts out that discreet bargaining and compromise which, however sordid and inelegant they may appear to Utopians, are yet the essential lubricant that oils the works of peaceful international life. Those who have long experience of the practice of international relations take in general a far less sceptical view of the possibilities of spontaneous co-operation between nations than those whose experience has been occasional or theoretical; they have watched and taken part in a constant interplay of peaceful accommodation between states and have won the conviction that the great majority of peoples and governments do wish to live in amity together and are ready to make reasonable sacrifices to that end. For these no special procedure of revision is needed, it goes on ceaselessly in the normal course of their foreign affairs, provided it is not demanded of them with arrogance, threats, or propaganda. Revision by consent is a far commoner process than those who are not directly concerned in these matters can ever suspect, since the function of the press is to reflect news-values, not to retail the humdrum successes of good-neighbourliness which yet make up a very respectable part of the sum of foreign affairs. And it is better so, because where revision is needed it is more easily achieved with diplomatic discretion than in the glare of publicity which offers all too many opportunities for demagogy to play on national passions and national sentimentalities.

If, however, as is often suggested, provision must be made for the revision of treaties against the will of one of the parties, it would be necessary to go far beyond Article XIX and to give to an international body the power to hear and decide applications. These in most cases would perforce be of a political rather than a judicial nature and would therefore have to be submitted to an international council consisting not of irremovable judges administering law, but of removable politicians reflecting the whims of their electorates. If non-judicial questions between states are to be decided by such a body, rules, norms, and a well-defined code of international conduct applying equally to all, must be established and accepted in advance, so that the parties may know where they stand, and the arbiters may have the chastening consciousness that with what measure they mete it will be measured to them again; for no state can be expected to commit its vital interests to other people's arbitrary ideas of abstract morality and the general good or to their transitory conceptions of the political advantage of the moment. If treaty law is not to be binding, and shifting principles of undefined equity and expediency are to be set up over it, the way will be open to every abuse by those who can exert the strongest pressure or conduct the most effective propaganda; and "Munichs" will become a

commonplace. The ideal League of Nations, an international forum fearlessly offering equal justice to all, to which great and small could bring their suits with the same confidence, is not yet in sight. Until it does appear it is safer and in every way more practical to leave revision to be carried out by normal diplomatic means.

THE ENGLISH PRESS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: AN ECONOMIC APPROACH

H. A. Innis

THE rationalism of the eighteenth century shed its light on the literature of the early part of the nineteenth century. In the second half of the century with the work of Darwin and Spencer that light began to grow dim. In the twentieth century we have seen the growth of irrationalism reflected in the interest in psychology, advertising, mass propaganda, totalitarian states and war. Mass propaganda of the Anglo-Saxon world, directed by such individuals as Hearst and Northcliffe, played an important role in the defeat of Germany in the last war. Its effectiveness was appreciated by totalitarian states who reinforced their instruction with the assistance of such new methods of communication as the radio and the cinema. The results were evident not only in the totalitarian states. Such phrases as "total war," "full employment," "anti-semitism," and the like, bandied about in the democratic states are a tribute to the influence of totalitarian propaganda, as are the innumerable measures which have been required to offset its effects and to bolster our morale. We have passed from the security and optimism which characterized the belief in progress in the nineteenth century to fear and pessimism and demands for security.

The nineteenth century was a period of transition from rationalism to irrationalism, and its literature reflects the character of the change. On the history of that transition it is hoped that this paper will throw some light. For the moment we shall say with Leslie Stephen[1] that philosophical thought and imaginative literature can have no history, being a by-product of social evolution, "the noise that the wheels make as they go round," and concentrate on technological developments affecting communication.

I

The Industrial Revolution had profound implications for printing and literature, in lowering the costs of paper and introducing steam power to the press. In 1799 Louis Robert at Essone in France designed a machine to make a continuous sheet of paper on an endless wire cloth turned on wheels, and a patent was taken out in England in 1804 by the Fourdinier brothers, after whom the machine was named. The length of time for the manufacturing process was reduced from five weeks to five days, and inventory charges were lowered sharply. The enormous expansion of demand for rags[2] in Great Britain and the United States and the export

[1] F. W. Maitland, *The Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen* (London, 1906), 283.

[2] Rags were imported to the extent of 7,061 tons in 1844, 10,140 tons in 1846, 6,953 in 1849, and 8,124 in 1850.

restrictions in continental countries stimulated a search for substitutes. Esparto grass was used in England in 1857. The abolition of the duty in 1861 brought imports of foreign paper and the removal of obstacles incidental to industrial monopolies which had grown up under the tariff. Chemical and mechanical pulp were used in the sixties and seventies, and by 1882 the shortage of paper could be said to be at an end.

The total production of paper in the United Kingdom increased from 11,347 tons in 1800, all of which was hand-made, to 100,000 tons in 1861, of which 96,385 tons was machine-made. After the removal of the duty in that year, production increased to 651,650 tons in 1900, of which 647,764 tons were machine-made. Including imports, consumption by the end of the century reached over a million tons. Prices had declined roughly from 1s. 6d. a pound at the beginning of the century to as low as ¾d. a pound in 1900. They had fallen to 10d. a pound in 1836, and 6½d. in 1859.[3] From 1861 they declined about two-thirds. The proportional cost of paper in publications declined during the century from two-thirds to less than one-tenth.

The use of steam power in the manufacture of paper was followed by its application to the press of *The Times* on November 29, 1814. Production per hour increased from 250 to 1000 copies. By 1853 Applegath's machine produced 200 copies per minute. The problems of the cylinder press were eventually solved by the Hoe firm in New York. The stereotype, and printing from a continuous sheet, or the web press, was introduced in the sixties, and improvements in folding machinery completed the long line of experiments leading to the fast press. The linotype solved the problem of type-setting in the late eighties and nineties. Development of the book press lagged behind the newspaper press, but the rotary press, the stereotype, and the monotype revolutionized production. Monopoly control in the newspaper field increased the supply of paper available for publication of periodicals and books during the first half century, and the substitution of esparto grass and wood for rags in the making of newspapers increased the supply of raw material available for books in the second half of the century.

II

The diffusion of the principles of free trade, which began with the publication of the *Wealth of Nations*, was perhaps most significant and least noticed in the field of literature. The monopolies, under taxation and the government regulation with which the press and the stage were distorted, were eventually destroyed with the growing interest in freedom of trade. In the main free trade was achieved in the commodities essential to

[3]The costs of fine quality paper declined from 17d. a pound in 1814 to 12d. in 1824, or from 49s. 7d. a ream to 35s. Printing paper declined in price from 24s. in 1831 to 15s. 6d. in 1843.

literature after it had been achieved for other commodities. The monopoly position of the principle of free trade during the early part of the nineteenth century on the one hand weakened the position of other principles and on the other checked its rapid diffusion.

The introduction of machinery under conditions of restriction favoured the growth of monopoly among the dailies. Taxes had increased to a stamp of 3 1/5d. net on each paper in 1815, and 3s. 6d. on every advertisement. "Four pages of advertisements and London and foreign reports cost sevenpence."[4] Taxes were being lowered but the monopoly of *The Times* was strengthened. The advertising tax was lowered to 18d. in 1833 and the stamp duty to 1d., and paper duties from 3d. to 1½d. per lb. in 1836. The advertising tax was abolished in 1853, and the stamp duty in 1855. By the middle of the century the annual circulation of *The Times* far surpassed the total of all the other London dailies. The taxes and their changes were of far-reaching significance to literature in the first half of the century.

The tendency of the printing industry to develop monopolies in London had from an early date attracted Scottish booksellers and writers intent on securing a share of the profits. Donaldson had secured a favourable court decision destroying perpetual copyright under the common law in 1774. Constable took full advantage of lower costs of printing in Edinburgh, of improved shipping facilities to London, of the restrictions on newspapers, and of the existence of a small energetic group of men in the law and the Church held back by aristocratic domination in Scotland, to support the launching of the *Edinburgh Review*. He paid unprecedented prices for articles and allowed complete freedom to his editors and contributors. The end of the long spell of drudgery by Grub Street writers, pilloried and made more despicable by Pope in the *Dunciad*, was in sight. The effectiveness of attacks on the Tories annoyed Sir Walter Scott and led him to support the *Quarterly Review*, published in London by John Murray. These reviews reflected opinions of the Whigs and Tories and were followed by the *Westminster Review* representing the radicals. But by the end of the first half of the century their influence had declined. The publishers assumed more active direction—Macvey Napier who followed Jeffrey as editor of the *Edinburgh Review* was also editor of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* for Constable and for Blackie. Lockhart, following Gifford as editor of the *Quarterly Review*, was more closely associated with John Murray in the publication and review of books. By 1855 it was possible for Henry Reeve, a leader-writer on *The Times*, to become editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. J. D. Cook and his staff from the *Morning Chronicle* started the *Saturday Review* in 1855. The increasing prestige of the journalist[5] accompanied a decline in the status of the reviews and a rise in the status of *The Times*. Its monopoly position enabled it to dominate opinion,

[4] W. H. Wickwar, *The Struggle for the Freedom of the Press, 1819-1832* (London, 1928), 30.

[5] In the twenties Scott was horrified at the idea of Lockhart's being associated with the press.

drove it into competition with the reviews, and left a wider field for periodicals and later for papers emphasizing news.

The high price of newspapers after 1815, and the tendency toward monopoly, provoked a large outbreak of illegal sheets, and the introduction of severe repressive legislation in 1819. William Cobbett began his twopenny *Political Register* in 1816, but fled to the United States in 1817. When he returned in 1819, bringing with him the bones of Tom Paine, he stirred up new interest in his doctrines. The repressive measures of 1819 were powerless to control the outburst of polemical writing centring about the unfortunate Queen Caroline. The scurrilous *John Bull*, edited by Theodore Hook, could not be overlooked by the government in its attempts to repress opposition literature. Richard Carlile, who persisted in printing the works of Tom Paine and with his family and workmen exhausted the resources of his persecutors, after six years of imprisonment was released in November, 1825. The cause of freedom of discussion triumphed with the support of John and Leigh Hunt, Shelley, Southey, Byron, Bentham, and James Mill. By 1832 the struggle was absorbed in the larger issues of the Reform Bill.

The restricted development of newspapers, and the decline in importance of news after the Napoleonic wars, favoured not only the publication of scurrilous sheets but also the growth of publishing firms interested in circulating libraries[6] and three-decker novels designed to extract revenue from readers. Sydney Smith wrote of the "customary phrases, union of souls, married in the eye of heaven, etc. etc. and such like diction, the types of which Mr. Lane of the Minerva Press very prudently keeps ready composed, in order to facilitate the printing of the adventures, etc."[7] Scott's novels dealt a serious blow to the productions of the Minerva Press. Scott had relinquished poetry because (in his own well-known words) "Byron

[6]"For as to the devotees of the circulating libraries, I dare not compliment their *pass-time*, or rather *kill-time*, with the name of *reading*. Call it rather a sort of beggarly day-dreaming, during which the mind of the dreamer furnishes for itself nothing but laziness, and a little mawkish sensibility; while the whole *material* and imagery of the dose is supplied *ab extra* by a sort of mental *camera obscura* manufactured at the printing office, which *pro tempore* fixes, reflects, and transmits the moving phantasms of one man's delirium, so as to people the barrenness of a hundred other brains afflicted with the same trance or suspension of all common sense and all definite purpose. We should therefore transfer this species of *amusement* (if indeed those can be said to retire *a musis*, who were never in their company, or relaxation be attributable to those, whose bows are never bent) from the genus, *reading*, to that comprehensive class characterized by the power of reconciling the two contrary yet co-existing propensities of human nature, namely indulgence of sloth, and hatred of vacancy. In addition to novels and tales of chivalry in prose or rhyme (by which last I mean neither rhythm nor metre), this genus comprises as its species, gaming, swinging, or swaying on a chair or gate; spitting over a bridge; smoking; snuff-taking; tête-à-tête quarrels after dinner between husband and wife; conning word by word all the advertisements of a daily newspaper in a public house on a rainy day, &c. &c. &c." S. T. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (Oxford, 1907), I, 34.

[7]*Works of the Rev. Sydney Smith* (3rd ed., London, 1845), III, 21-2; see also Dorothy Blakey, *The Minerva Press, 1790-1820* (London, 1939).

beat me. . . . He beat me out of the field in the description of the strong passions, and in deep-seated knowledge of the human breast; so I gave up poetry for the time." After the Napoleonic wars the demand for patriotic poetry disappeared, and Wordsworth wrote such verse as to lead Jeffrey to say in the *Edinburgh*, "This will never do." Murray deliberately refused to publish poetry after Byron's successes and took to tourist guides and cook-books.[8] The firm of Edward Moxon specialized in poetry and, in spite of the popularity of Tennyson, eventually went into bankruptcy. Nor was the change confined to poetry. By 1821 Sydney Smith could write of *The Pirate* as "one of the least fortunate of Sir Walter Scott's productions. It seems now that he can write nothing without Meg Merrilies and Dominie Samson! One other such novel and there's an end; but who can last forever? Who ever lasted so long?"[9] The advantages enjoyed by Scottish writers and publishers in attacking the monopoly in London came to an end in the crash of 1826 and the transfer of the *Edinburgh Review* to Longman and the *Encyclopædia Britannica* to Blackie, and in the tragedy of Sir Walter Scott's life. The fashion shifted from Scott to the realism of the novels of Theodore Hook and the silver-fork school of fiction.

The tax on advertising encouraged publishers to establish journals designed to give extremely favourable reviews of their books. The review replaced the advertisement. Henry Colburn started the *Literary Gazette* with William Jerdan as editor in 1817, and in 1821 converted the *New Monthly Magazine* into a literary periodical edited by Thomas Campbell with the active assistance of Cyrus Redding. He transferred his interest in the *Literary Gazette* to Longman and the latter sold to Jerdan, who was charged with developing his periodical in the interests of prospective advertisers. "However meritorious he may be," wrote Cyrus Redding, "the writer has little chance of attracting the attention of modern criticism without some preponderating influence on the part of the trade in paper and print."[10] Colburn not only exercised control over his own periodicals but also over other publications. Of the *New Times*, the *Examiner*, and *John Bull* he wrote regarding possible reviews of Lady Morgan's *Italy*: "I am intimately acquainted with the editors, and advertising with them a good deal keeps them in check."[11] It was significant that the *London Magazine*, established in 1820 by Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, and acquired by Taylor and Hessey, publishers of Keats's poetry, was absorbed by the *New Monthly* in 1829. The failure of the latter was "owing to the extraordinary force of the political tide at that period, the proof of which is manifest from the fact of some of their publications' commencing with a

[8]See *Autobiography of Henry Taylor, 1800-1875* (London, 1885), I, 193.

[9]Smith to Francis Jeffrey, Dec. 30, 1821, in *A Memoir of the Reverend Sydney Smith* by his daughter Lady Holland with a selection from his letters edited by Mrs. Austin (New York, 1855), II, 217.

[10]*Personal Reminiscences of Eminent Men* (London, 1867), II, 293.

[11]M. F. Brightfield, *John Wilson Croker* (Berkeley, 1940).

rapid sale, and stopping abruptly after the appearance of several virulent attacks from periodicals who were opposed to the politics or liberal sentiments of the writers. The other publishers have ruined themselves from adopting an opposite extreme."[12] S. C. Hall followed Campbell[13] as editor in 1830 and was followed by Bulwer from November 1, 1831, to August, 1833. Colburn formed a partnership with Richard Bentley in 1829 but this was dissolved in 1832, and after Bulwer left the editorship, his novels were published by Bentley. Colburn retained control of the *New Monthly*, and Bentley persuaded Dickens to edit *Bentley's Miscellany* in 1837.

Authors were induced by publishers to take an active interest in writing and editing miscellanies. Harrison Ainsworth had raised the art of puffing his own works to new levels and had developed considerable skill in handling reviewers.[14] His *Rockwood*, published by Bentley in 1834, had an instantaneous success. The fashion for criminal romances had its influence on Dickens, and *Pickwick* was regarded by Lockhart as "damned low." As editor of *Bentley's Miscellany*, Dickens was followed by Ainsworth in 1839. The latter's *Jack Sheppard* was issued periodically from January, 1839, to February, 1840, and published in three volumes. He started *Ainsworth's Magazine* in 1842 and bought the *New Monthly Magazine* in 1844. Thomas Hood resigned as editor of the latter in January, 1844, and started *Hood's Magazine*.

From the forties to the sixties journalists were crowded out by the disappearance of newspapers in the unequal struggle with *The Times*, and were led to concentrate on weekly periodicals and numbers which, without news, were free from stamp taxes. *Old St. Paul's* and *The Lancashire Witches* by Ainsworth were issued serially in the *Sunday Times*. Dickens, after his short editorship of the *Daily News* in 1846, started his *Household Words* in 1850, replaced by *All the year Round* in 1859. Dickens had begun as a reporter on the *Morning Chronicle* and the influence of journalism was evident throughout his work. Bagehot commented on his style as reflecting "the overflow of a copious mind, though not the chastened expression of an harmonious one." His genius was suited to the delineation of city life since London was like a newspaper: "Everything is there and everything

[12]R. H. Horne, *Exposition of the False Medium excluding Men of Genius from the Public* (1833), cited in *Edmund Blunden, Keats's Publisher* (London, 1936), 203.

[13]"He suggested the idea of Le Bon Dieu coming to London to seek the copyright of the Bible and going the round of the publishers. He hit off Longman wonderfully. Longman observed to his 'Lordship' that the copyright was of late years deteriorated in value, hazardous to publish, but might still do for a school book; he would be very happy to print it at his Lordship's expense on commission.

Then Le Bon Dieu goes to Colburn. Colburn does not dispute the general merit of the work but doubts whether it will take with the fashionable world. He suggests a few alterations of high life—the manger and the fisherman are decidedly low—and a few piquant anecdotes about the court of King Herod." Michael Sadleir, *Bulwer: A Panorama*, (London, 1931), 204-5.

[14]See S. M. Ellis, *William Harrison Ainsworth and his Friends* (London, 1911).

is disconnected." According to the *Saturday Review*, the writings of Dickens were "the apotheosis of what has been called newspaper English." He "makes points everywhere, gives unfamiliar names to the commonest objects, and lavishes a marvellous quantity of language on the most ordinary incidents."[15] The haphazard absence of form encouraged by journalism influenced Thackeray as well as Dickens. "Newspaper writing spoils one for every other kind of writing. I am unwilling now, more than ever to write letters to my friends, and always find myself attempting to make a pert, actual point at the end of a sentence."[16]

Monopolistic restrictions characterized the stage as well as the newspaper and contributed also to the development of periodical literature. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Covent Garden and Drury Lane theatres still occupied a privileged position. The former was enlarged and reopened in 1810 and the latter in 1812. The stage was used to appeal to the eye rather than to the ear: spectacles and melodrama were the fashion. "At present the English instead of finding politics in the stage, find their stage in politics."[17] Writers such as Theodore Hook and Douglas Jerrold turned from plays to periodical publications, and managers turned to translators and adapters of French plays.[18]

The work of authors who might otherwise have written for the stage was supplemented by the development of illustrations. Almanacs had been produced under monopoly privileges. Competition introduced by Ackermann from Germany in 1822 was astonishingly successful, and was followed by numerous imitations which emphasized increasingly elaborate illustrations, Lamb's "ostentatious trumpery". The work of Bewick in revolutionizing the technique of wood-cutting encouraged the development of illustrations in books and periodicals. The support of writers turned from the stage, merged with the increasing interest in illustrations, and political caricatures introduced from France, to produce the forerunners of *Punch* in the thirties and *Punch* and its numerous imitators in the forties and fifties. The *Illustrated London News* was a product of the same conditions and was strengthened by journalists such as Charles MacKay from the *Morning Chronicle*.

Periodical literature was enriched further by the work of Charles Knight in London and of the Chambers brothers in Edinburgh. Since governmental restrictions were particularly concerned with news, periodicals rigidly excluding news grew rapidly. *Chambers' Journal* had an amazing success from the beginnings in the early thirties. Knight was supported by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, sponsored by Brougham and others, and his *Penny Magazine*, started at about the same time, while successful during the early thirties, eventually succumbed as a

[15]M. M. Bevington, *The Saturday Review, 1855-1868* (New York, 1941), 162.
[16]Quoted in Malcolm Elwin, *Thackeray, a Personality* (London, 1932), 55.
[17]Edward Lytton Bulwer, *England and the English* (London, 1833), II, 14.
[18]See Charles Reade, *The Eighth Commandment* (London, 1860).

result of dullness and the burden of the paper duties. Hazlitt's reference to "the diffusion of useless knowledge about useful facts" summarized the general view. It was the claim of both Knight and the owners of *Chambers' Journal* that the dangers arising from the radical journals which flourished during the long period of the fight against the taxes on knowledge, and which supported the Chartist movement, were materially lessened; and this claim was to some extent justified. In any case, numerous radical journals and the scandalous blackmail sheets, such as the *Age* under Westmacott and the *Satirist* under Gregory, disappeared in the forties.

The rank outgrowth of literature which sprang up as a result of monopoly in the newspaper field brought correctives. *Blackwood's* began in 1817, and under its auspices Lockhart and John Wilson (Christopher North) made vigorous attacks on London writers, which involved a duel and the killing of John Scott, editor of the *London Magazine*. It was followed by *Fraser's Magazine* in the early thirties. Under the editorship of Maginn, the writers for Colburn and Bentley were savagely reviewed. The *Athenaeum* under Charles Dilke, more sober, refused to accept the dictation of publishers. From the beginning Dilke announced his "direct opposition to *trade* criticism and *paid* criticism." Perhaps the most effective attack on the artificialities of the literature of the first half-century was made by Bulwer who as an author of Bentley's suffered much from the personal abuses of anonymous journalism.[19] He not only replied to the attacks in kind but he became influential in the political field. His speeches in parliament against the taxes on knowledge from 1832 to 1855 were masterpieces of analysis in the tradition of Adam Smith, and contributed powerfully to the removal of monopoly privileges for the newspaper and the theatre. Competition was encouraged with the lowering and abolition of taxes on advertising, paper, and stamps.

III

In the second half of the century the decline in taxes was accompanied by a revolution in journalism. *The Times* was at the peak of its influence in the fifties and its competition had resulted in the disappearance of such rivals as the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Morning Herald*, the *Sun* and others. Thereupon a new group of powerful newspapers emerged, including the *Daily News* and the *Daily Telegraph*. The advertising tax had been responsible for the rash of bill posters which broke out over London, and its removal led to the retreat of advertising to the newspapers. Following its success in distributing tea at a uniform price throughout England, the firm of Gillespie actively and successfully sponsored uniform penny postage in 1840. Post-office facilities were improved and extended with the construction of railways. The telegraph and the cable brought a vast increase in news for distribution and facilitated the rapid growth of a large number

[19]See Edward Lytton Bulwer, *England and the English* (London, 1833), II.

of provincial newspapers. The extension of the franchise in 1867, and the Education Act of 1870, which reflected the necessity of educating "our masters" (in Lowe's famous phrase), created a large number of readers. Competition was restricted by the government in the first half of the century and subsidized by it in the second half.

The marked expansion of a new group of newspapers in London and in the provinces in the second half of the century was accompanied by the decline of *The Times* to the point of bankruptcy by 1890 and its sale to Northcliffe in 1908. Its emphasis on political influence, which enabled it to destroy the Aberdeen administration in the Crimean War, weakened its position with the increasing importance of news. Editorial support of the South in the Civil War made it impossible for W. H. Russell to duplicate the success as a war correspondent which he had achieved in the Crimea. The training of correspondents in the Civil War (especially with the New York *Tribune*) and the use of the cable enabled the London *Daily News* and Archibald Forbes, in the Franco-Prussian War, to displace *The Times* and Russell. Finally, the publication of the forged Pigott letters destroyed even the political influence of *The Times*. The destruction of its political supremacy was the last phase of the struggle against the mercantile system. The success of Gladstone, the beginnings of large majorities in the House of Commons, and the emergence of the caucus as a device for party control reflected the influence of the *Daily News* and other papers and the provincial press. The increasing susceptibility of Parliament to the influence of the press was shown in the unfortunate expedition to Egypt under General Gordon, a result of the demands of W. T. Stead in the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

The new journalism, in which Stead was a pioneer, received strong support from the development of penny weeklies in London, whose "principal characteristic is a senile imbecility on the one hand, or an irrational sensationalism on the other, equally destructive to anything like masculine vigour of thought."[20] By the early eighties these weeklies had a circulation of between five and six million. The *Family Herald* and the *London Journal*, started in the middle forties, were particularly popular because of the emphasis on correspondence. The founders of the *Weekly Budget* had discovered that readers in large cities demanded light amusing reading with news.[21] George Newnes and later Alfred Harmsworth exploited this

[20]The words are Francis Hitchman's in an article on "The Penny Press" printed in the *Eclectic Magazine* for 1881.

[21]"No article in the paper is to measure more than two inches in length, and every inch must be broken into at least two paragraphs. . . .

I would have the paper address itself to the quarter-educated; that is to say, the great new generation that is being turned out by the Board schools, the young men and women who can just read, but are incapable of sustained attention. People of this kind want something to occupy them in trains and on 'buses and trams. As a rule they care for no newspapers except the Sunday ones; what they want is the lightest and frothiest of chit-chatty information—bits of stories, bits of description, bits of scandal, bits of jokes, bits of statistics, bits of foolery. Am I not right? Everything must be very short, two inches

discovery, the one in *Tit-bits* and the other in *Answers*. From these origins there emerged the *Daily Express* under Arthur Pearson and the *Daily Mail* under the Harmsworth brothers and Kennedy Jones. American experience in the handling of news became important in the evening papers and then spread to the morning papers. But in both Great Britain and the United States the Boer War and the Spanish American War enabled sensational journalism to reach new peaks. Wemyss Reid wrote of the Boer War: "It has been said that this has been a war made by newspapers. Evidently the newspapers are capable of carrying it on."[22]

The enormous expansion of newspapers and periodicals made heavy demands on writing. For his periodical, Dickens was said to have read 900 manuscripts of which he accepted eleven and rewrote them. Even the Rev. Whitwell Elwin, editor of the *Quarterly Review*, wrote in 1854 that "the art of writing pure English is almost lost."[23] By 1875, according to Maitland, "there was hardly a newspaper in England that was fit to read."[24] English journalism had suffered in the first half of the century from the effects of the stamp tax in ways already described but also from its emphasis on size and small type and from the necessity of using quantities of miscellaneous material. Anonymity, the low standard of journalism, and the gap between journalism and politics were in part the result. In France journalism without anonymity was recognized as the highway to office, whereas in England the most damaging charge ever brought against Brougham was that he wrote for a newspaper. The penny-a-liner was employed on an extensive scale to fill the columns of the paper. Even

at the utmost; their attention can't sustain itself beyond two inches. Even chat is too solid for them: they want chit-chat." (George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, London, 1904, 419.)

"I know a man who was once engaged at Jolly & Monk's—the chief publishers of that kind of thing, you know; I must look him up—what a mistake it is to neglect *any* acquaintance!—and get some information out of him. But it's obvious what an immense field there is for anyone who can just hit the taste of the new generation of Board-school children. Mustn't be too goody-goody; that kind of thing is falling out of date. But you'd have to cultivate a particular kind of vulgarity. There's an idea, by-the-bye. I'll write a paper on the characteristics of that new generation; it may bring me a few guineas, and it would be a help to you." (*Ibid.*, 28-9.)

[22]Wemyss Reid, "The Newspapers" (*Nineteenth Century*, XLVI, 1899, 848-64).

[23]*Some XVIII Century Men of Letters, Biographical Essays by the Rev. Whitwell Elwin*, edited by his son Warwick Elwin (London, 1902), 130.

[24]F. W. Maitland, *The Life and Letters of Leslie Stephen* (London, 1906), 258.

"The evil of the time is the multiplication of ephemerides. Hence a demand for essays, descriptive articles, fragments of criticisms, out of all proportion to the supply of even tolerable work. The men who have an aptitude for turning out this kind of thing in vast quantities are enlisted by every new periodical, with the result that their productions are ultimately watered down into worthlessness." (George Gissing, *The New Grub Street*, London, 1904, 31.)

"But surely before long some Edison would make the true automaton; the problem must be comparatively such a simple one. Only to throw in a given number of old books, and have them reduced, blended, modernised into a single one for to-day's consumption." *Ibid.*, 95.

Charles Lamb confessed that he often used the statement, "It is not generally known that the three Blue Balls at the Pawnbroker's shop are the ancient arms of the Lombards. The Lombards were the first money brokers in Europe." The art of spinning out information is again illustrated in the sentence, "He was a policeman and his name was Smith." With the demands of competition the necessity of relying on an organized staff of journalists reduced the work of the penny-a-liner but the demands for verbiage were still paramount.[25] A. B. Reach was a pioneer in presenting journalistic material in readable and attractive form. George Augustus Sala was a conspicuous artist in the *Daily Telegraph*, of whom Matthew Arnold wrote: "he blends the airy epicureanism of the *salons* of Augustus with the full blooded gaiety of our English cider-cellar. . . . This mixture . . . is now the very thing to do down; there arises every day a larger public for it."[26] Professional journalists were influenced in style by popular writers, particularly Macaulay, Mill, and Froude, and by Carlyle in the United States.

> When clever pressmen write this way,
> "As Mr. J. A. Froude would say,"
> Is it because they think he would,
> And have they read a line of Froude?
> Or is it only that they fear
> The comment they have made is queer,
> And that they either must erase it,
> Or say it's Mr. Froude who says it?[27]

The demand for writers was met in part by the universities. The monopoly of Oxford and Cambridge in education was weakened by the establishment of the University of London in 1827. The improvement in status of Roman Catholics, after the Quebec Act of 1774, was eventually followed by their emancipation in 1827.[28] The problem of the established

[25]"You must know, that the first time I met Angus he told me imprudently some foolish story about a stick that bred a disease in the owner's hand, owing to his pressing so heavily on the ball it had by way of a handle. I touched the story up a little, and made half-a-guinea out of it. Since then that note has been turning up in a new dress in the most unlikely places. First the London correspondents swooped down on it, and telegraphed it all over the country as something that had happened to a well-known Cabinet Minister. It appeared in the Paris *Figaro* as a true story about Sir Gladstone, and soon afterwards it was across the channel as a reminiscence of Thiers. Having done another tour of the provinces it was taken to America by a lecturer, who exhibited the stick. Next it travelled the Continent, until it was sent home again by Paterfamilias Abroad, writing to the *Times*, who said that the man who owned the stick was a well-known Alpine guide. Since then we have heard of it fitfully as doing well in Melbourne and Arkansas. It figured in the last volume, or rather two volumes, of autobiography published, and now, you see, it is going the round of the clubs again, preparatory to starting on another tour." J. M. Barrie, *When a Man's Single* (New York, 1896), 234. This volume includes numerous amusing accounts of journalism.

[26]*Friendship's Garland* (London, 1903), 108-9.

[27]J. M. Barrie, *op. cit.*, 172.

[28]It was claimed that Irish law-students as reporters of debates played an important role in securing the legislation ("On the taxes on knowledge," *Westminister Review*, July 1, 1831, 18).

church in Ireland contributed to the Anglo-Catholic movement and the departure of Newman from Oxford. The influence of science began with the appearance of Lyell's *Principles of Geology* (1833) and *The Vestiges of Creation* (1844), written by Robert Chambers but published anonymously, followed by Darwin and the controversy over *The Origin of Species* (1859). Oxford was opened to Dissenters in 1858. Young men who had planned to take orders found their faith weakened and turned to writing and journalism. J. A. Froude and Leslie Stephen renounced clerical orders; the latter calling in Thomas Hardy to witness the ceremony, after the act in 1870 permitting renunciation. He wrote, "I became gradually convinced after the most serious reflection I could give that the Christian position was untenable. I therefore gave up my profession and took to literature."[29] Morley entered journalism and politics. W. L. Courtney on the *Daily Telegraph* and Chenery, the successor of Delane on *The Times*, came from Oxford.

These writers contributed to the revolution in periodicals which accompanied the revolution in newspapers. Periodicals, such as *Fraser's Magazine* which after 1840 represented the Broad Church movement, the *Saturday Review* (1855) which reflected High Church opinion, and other periodicals had been supported by journalists released from newspapers such as the *Morning Chronicle* which disappeared under the monopoly of *The Times*. The interest in religion was evident in the vigorous disputes between Freeman and Froude; its decline was evident in the purchase of *Fraser's* by Longman in 1863 and its absorption in *Longmans' Magazine* in 1882 and in the sale of the *Saturday Review* by the Beresford Hope family in 1891. The effects of the interest in science were shown in the rise of Chapman and Hall, publishers of Herbert Spencer's work, and of Macmillan's supported by the interest of Cambridge University. The *Fortnightly Review* from 1867 to 1882 published numerous articles with powerful attacks on theology. The *Revue des deux Mondes* was used as a model and anonymity was abandoned. The *Contemporary Review* was started in1866 as a religious periodical and the *Nineteenth Century* in 1877.

Railway construction in the forties was followed by a marked improvement in methods of distribution shown in the organization of W. H. Smith and Co. and Mudies. The *Cornhill Magazine* (1860) was started by George Smith of Smith, Elder and Co. with Thackeray as editor. It combined the critical review and the serial novel in a magazine sold for a shilling. Its phenomenal success brought imitators, and fiction serials opened the way for the cheap novel. Authors became less concerned with their own magazines and, like Thackeray, Trollope and George Eliot, accepted fabulous sums for serial rights. The demands for cheap editions of novels brought the yellow-back of the early sixties.[30] By the early nineties the three-

[29]F. W. Maitland, 150.

[30]Michael Sadleir, *The Evolution of Publishers' Binding Styles, 1770-1900* (London, 1930).

decker novel, the staple of circulating libraries, was no longer able to compete with the serial and the cheap novel.

Whatever may be said of the three-decker novel at 31s. 6d., it had the advantage of handsome octavos, clear type, and splendid illustrations. There was no huddling of type and matter, and the pages were not a conglomeration of almost invisible lines.[31] It had contributed to the petty piracy of Thomas Tegg of which Carlyle complained and to the second-hand book trade in which John Lackington had a phenomenal success in the early part of the century. In "The temple of the muses" he kept "about half a million of volumes" which he bought and which he sold only for cash. The novel's size involved Procrustean demands on the author,[32] and its patronage by the wealthier classes and the circulating libraries required puritanical standards. Since novels were read aloud by lamplight in family gatherings the contents had to be harmless. George Moore, in 1885, hastened its decline in his pamphlet *Literature at Nurse or Circulating Morals*, and opened the way to French influence and the treatment of sex. The climate began to change. As the influence of Italy was displaced by that of Germany after the defeat of Napoleon, the marriage of Queen Victoria, and the attraction of the brief intensive flowering of German culture in the Romantic era to Coleridge, Carlyle and others, so the influence of Germany was replaced by France after the Franco-German War in which Europe had lost a mistress and gained a master.

The collapse of the three-decker novel followed the destruction of the monopoly of *The Times*. The new literature followed the new journalism. Murray had refused to publish Harriet Martineau's *Deerbrook* because it dealt with the middle classes. *The Times* during the monopoly period, and the *Daily Telegraph* and other newspapers which developed with the lowering of taxes, represented the middle classes of whom Matthew Arnold spoke with such contempt. With the gain in literacy after the Education Act of 1870 and the commercialization of literature, the lower classes made enormous demands for the new journalism and the new literature and these demands were met by cheap paper and printing and the new Grub Street

[31] William Tinsley, *Random recollections of an old publisher* (London, 1900), 534.

[32] "Messieurs and mesdames the critics are wont to point out the weakness of second volumes; they are generally right, simply because a story which would have made a tolerable book (the common run of stories) refuses to fill three books." George Gissing, *New Grub Street*, 117.

"How is it possible to abandon the three volumes? It is a question of payment. An author of moderate repute may live on a yearly three-volume novel—I mean the man who is obliged to sell his book out and out, and who gets from one to two hundred pounds for it. But he would have to produce four one-volume novels to obtain the same income; and I doubt whether he could get so many published within the twelve months. And here comes in the benefit of the libraries; from the commercial point of view the libraries are indispensable. Do you suppose the public would support the present number of novelists if each book had to be purchased? A sudden change to that system would throw three-fourths of the novelists out of work." *Ibid.*, 183.

described by George Gissing and Anthony Trollope.[33] The popularity of fiction followed the lower prices of novels. Books were sold in enormous quantities and popular writers, particularly women, wrote incredible numbers of novels. Arnold Bennett in a series of articles written at the end of the century described the work of writers of whom many readers will not have heard: M. E. Braddon, Rhoda Broughton, Sarah Grand, E. T. Fowler, Mary Cholmondely.[34] Among the defects of the average reader's taste he noted an absence of all sense of beauty of form. "Perhaps the utter collapse of architecture the most influential of all the arts, has something to do with this condition of things; perhaps it is only an effect."[35] The average reader showed an inability to perceive art-work as a whole, a taste for crude sentimentalism such as that supplied by Rudyard Kipling, and a dislike of all fiction disturbing to his basic ideas. Arnold Bennett, in spite of his concern for form, studied the art of meeting the needs of the average reader with effect. In the magazines "the final word of editorial cunning" was "the connected series of short stories, of five or six thousand words each, in which the same characters, pitted against a succession of criminals or adverse fates, pass again and again through situations thrillingly dangerous, and emerge at length into the calm security of ultimate conquest. . . . Its universal adoption is a striking instance of that obsequious pampering of mental laziness and apathy which marks all the most successful modern journalism."[36] Conan Doyle, Grant Allen, and above all L. T. Meade, used the formula with effect. To quote Bennett once more:

> The public, which hitherto had accepted meekly what the publisher provided, found itself elevated to a throne, with the publisher obsequiously bowing at the foot thereof. . . . The modern editor . . . explores the nature of the demand to be met as patiently and thoroughly as a German manufacturer. With a mixture of logic and cynicism he states boldly that what people ought to want is no affair of his; and in ascertaining precisely what they in fact do want he never loses sight of the great philosophic truth that man is a frail creature. He assiduously ministers to human infirmities. The public would like to read, to instruct itself, educate itself, amuse itself, elevate itself, but no effort and no sacrifice must be involved in the process. The way must be made straight, every obstacle

[33]Gissing has been cited earlier; Trollope likewise complains:

"All those who are struggling for success have forced upon them the idea that their strongest efforts should be made in touting for praise. Those who are not familiar with the lives of authors will hardly believe how low will be the forms which their struggles will take:—How little presents will be sent to men who write little articles; how much flattery may be expended even on the keeper of a circulating library; with what profuse and distant genuflexions approaches are made to the outside railing of the temple which contains within it the great thunderer of some metropolitan periodical publication! The evil here is not only that done to the public when interested counsel is given to them, but extends to the debasement of those who have at any rate considered themselves fit to provide literature for the public." Anthony Trollope, *Autobiography* (London, 1883), III, 93-4.

[34]E. A. Bennett, *Fame and Fiction* (London, 1901); see also Q. D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London, 1932).

[35]*Ibid.*, 13.

[36]*Ibid.*, 135.

shifted, every lion killed in advance. Inducements must be offered and all the yielding must be on one side. Only by such means can a new market, however vast potentially, be set upon a secure and steady basis.[37]

The large-scale circulation of sixpenny magazines at the end of the century was increased further by the more frequent use of illustrations. Improvements in wood-engraving had been followed by the half-tone process, and illustrated periodicals weakened the position of serial publications. Improved machinery for the printing of books and periodicals followed improvements in the printing of newspapers, and lower prices destroyed monopolies in publishing. Mechanization in book and periodical production created a revolution comparable to that in journalism. The low prices of periodicals and books and wide circulation favored the growth of the one-price system. Alfred Marshall allowed Macmillans to publish his *Principles of Economics* at a fixed net price and the experiment was followed by the organization of publishers for the control of prices. Under the leadership of Sir Walter Besant, authors in turn organized for the protection of their interests. American copyright legislation in 1890 created a new series of rights, and the literary agent emerged to interpret them.

The collapse of the three-decker novel and the circulating library cannot be understood without reference to other European countries and particularly to the United States. The high prices of the three-volume novel in the first half of the century stimulated competition from French and Belgian printers who smuggled copies of English books into England.[38] The high cost of paper made the position of the English author, as compared with the French author, an unenviable one. In turn, the English author had a strong incentive to become editor and publisher and to publish in periodicals as well as in the novel-form, as we have seen in the case of Ainsworth and Dickens.

High prices meant not only smuggling from the continent but also, with the absence of copyright, large-scale piracy of English books in the United States and a smaller-scale piracy of American ones in England. English books were rushed to the United States and hurriedly printed in a wild competitive scramble.[39] One of Carlyle's early works was published first in the United States as were De Quincey's collected writings. W. C. Bryant published one of his first books in England, and Henry Adams deliberately published his attack on the Erie financiers there, in order to

[37] *Ibid.*, 125-6. "I have an idea of offering substantial prizes to men and women engaged in sedentary work who take an oath to abstain from all reading, and keep it for a certain number of years. There's a good deal more need for that than for abstinence from strong liquor. If I could have had my way I would have revived prize-fighting." George Gissing, *op. cit.*, 19.

[38] G. P. R. James, "Some Observations on the Book Trade as connected with Literature in England" (*Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, VI, 1843).

[39] See a reference to the printing of Moore's *Lalla Rookh* in New York in 1816: T. W. Barnes, *Memoir of Thurlow Weed* (Boston, 1884), 194.

secure the widest possible circulation in the United States. English authors, such as Dickens, visited the United States to scold American readers for their refusal to pay royalties, and to secure a wider market. Harriet Martineau was asked by Harpers to write of her experiences in the United States by "Trollopizing" a book. Freedom of the newspapers from taxation encouraged rapid expansion in the United States as compared with Great Britain. The penny-newspaper emerged in the early thirties. The American author found himself driven into journalism by English competition and pulled into it by the demand for newspaper writers. Bryant became editor of the New York *Evening Post*. The English book dominated the American market and American journalism gained from American writing. The newspaper monopoly in England drove writers into periodicals and books, and these in turn drove American writers into American journalism.[40] With the introduction of the steamship in the fifties, *Harper's* was built up with English fiction at the expense of a market for the American writer. The removal of the taxes on knowledge in England left English journalism exposed to the full impact of the advances in American journalism. R. Hoe and Company presses were first used by English papers in the fifties. At the end of the century the new journalism was in command in the United States and in England.

In the economic history of literature and journalism in England and the United States the class structure occupies a dominant position. The reviews of the early part of the nineteenth century were crowded out by the monopoly position of *The Times* and ceased to play a crucial role in political strategy. *The Times* dominated the middle classes from the first Reform Bill to the fifties. The removal of the taxes on knowledge, the extension of the franchise, and the development of the telegraph and cable opened the way for the *Daily News* (1846) and the *Daily Telegraph* (1855), and a penetration of journalism to the lower classes at the expense of *The Times*. Finally the Education Act of 1870, cheap newsprint, and low costs of printing brought a third revolution indicated by the coming of the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express*. Public opinion as a reflection of the middle classes became less important, and popular clamour made rapid

[40] "Nothing was said about the hatred or fear entertained of literature and its professors by the aristocracy of Great Britain; though much was said about the superior chances afforded in the United States, to men of letters who aspired to a political or a diplomatic career.

In the United States a newspaper editor, if a man of talent and sagacity above the average, and endowed with the power of language, either with the tongue or with the pen, can make himself anything that he pleases—not, perhaps, President of the Republic, for that is a post which, for the last forty years, has not been within the grasp of any man of ability, or of anybody but some harmless third-rate politician, who has not made too many enemies in his public career; but a Vice-President, a Secretary of State, or an ambassador to London or Paris. No such chances are afforded to the journalist or the mere man of letters in England, although Mr. Disraeli's career may seem an instance to the contrary. But Mr. Disraeli became a statesman, not because of his being, but in spite of his being an author." Charles MacKay, *Forty Years Recollections* (London, 1877), II, 281-2.

headway.[41] And so we entered the open seas of democracy in the twentieth century with nothing to worship but the totalitarianism of the modern state. A century of peace gave way to a century of war.

[41]See W. A. Mackinnon, *History of Civilization and Public Opinion* (London, 1849).

"The magic of Gutenberg and Füst hath conjured a wide chasm between the past and the future history of mankind: the people of one side the gulf are not the people of the other; the physical force is no longer separated from the moral; mind has by slow degrees crept into the mighty mass—the popular Cymon has received a soul! In the primal and restless consciousness of the new spirit, Luther appealed to the people—the first, since Christ, who so adventured. From that moment all the codes of classic dogmatists were worthless—the expired leases to an estate just let to new tenants, and upon new conditions." Edward Lytton Bulwer, *England and the English*, (London, 1833), II, 257-8.

MORALITY IN THE FORSYTE SAGA

FREDERICK PHILIP GROVE

THE age of which Galsworthy wrote is dead. Here and there, of course, there are remnants of it remaining; but as a static society it is gone and buried. It was one of its characteristics that it considered itself as static, as the ultimate flowering of a whole civilization beyond which no progress was possible; when they, the Forsytes, a generation of middlemen, fundamentally parasites, had, from middle-class people, become the upper class, displacing what they themselves called "land," they thought themselves the *ne-plus-ultra* of a development that had started as the industrial revolution; and when the changes came which took their final impulse from the War of 1914, they vanished as a class, making room for a harder and at the same time softer generation.

The age being gone, it is time, perhaps, to attempt a preliminary appraisal of Galsworthy's work; preliminary, I say; for it will take decades to clarify the issue; it cannot be done by a wholesale condemnation such as D. H. Lawrence attempted.[1] For that, the work, when all is said and done, is too considerable an artistic achievement, if only in an architectonic sense.

It is not the purpose of what follows to present such an appraisal; my aim is more modest; I propose to examine one point only, namely the consistency or inconsistency of the system of morality underlying the Saga.

Even in such a point of detail it is difficult to say a final word till the age with which a work of art deals is dead; it is only after its death that the bones and sinews of the work as a purely artistic achievement stand out. That is the reason why the popular use of the word "classic" as applied to contemporary work is so nonsensical.

Homer's age is dead; but his work lives. Why? May one say because, out of his age, he built enduringly? Because, using the facts and issues of his age like bricks, as it were, he embodied in his structure what is of no special age, namely the fate of all mankind as such? Being consistent, throughout, in keeping his eye on the wider, the universal issues, he short-circuited, as it were, the smaller currents of his time, those of the day in which he lived, and assigned them the place in which they assumed the exact proportions that, viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*, belonged to them. Behind them all stood the one great issue, that of human life on earth—which is the same today as it was at the dawn of history and probably before that dawn, as we should see were it not for the fact that the mist of time narrows down our horizon. In other words, between the minor issues and the one great issue, Homer held the balance even. He did not take sides, even for his age. He viewed that particular section of human life which he depicted, the war between Trojans and Greeks from a height

[1]V. *Phoenix*, Viking Press, 539.

such as to make their antagonisms appear as minor things, compared with what both Greeks and Trojans, after all, had in common, their simple humanity. What, to us, today, are the quarrels of Agamemnon and Achilles, of Hector and Patroclus, of Paris and Menelaus, "Good at the war-cry?"

At the centre of what is not static in the Forsyte Saga stands a quarrel, too: the quarrel between Soames and Irene. What is it to us today? "Nous avons changé tout cela." Have we? Perhaps. Well, all the more, then, does the question become relevant. In depicting this quarrel, does Galsworthy hold the balance even? For I believe this question to be fundamental; on the answer to it depends, at least in part, the answer to that other question whether Galsworthy built enduringly or not.

May I touch on a few side issues before I proceed? When we speak of the Forsyte Saga today, what do we mean? There are six major novels which comprise the cycle, and a number of interludes some of which seem rather deplorable to us. No doubt there were other epics which went under the name of Homer; we know of some of them; they have disappeared. Already we can say that, if there is any chance of Galsworthy's work living on through the ages—though I believe there is not—at least three of the novels comprised in the saga will disappear, more likely five; as Galsworthy progressed in his work, there was a steady falling-off in interest and in the power of shadowing forth the eternal in the particular; and when one has not read the work as a whole for some years, already the title means, in the last resort, the one novel which bears the subtitle *The Man of Property*.

But even in *The Man of Property* there is much that one skips when one is only trying to recapture the delight with which one read them when they first appeared. No matter where you take Homer, he remains Homer, even in a catalogue of ships. One reacts to him as one reacts to real life, getting the artistic or aesthetic pleasure as a sort of bonus. One does fight shy of Jolyon the son and all his brood; not because one dislikes them personally, but because one is so conscious of being expected to like them. Homer is entirely free of any element that might be called sentimental; he never works on the emotions, though the satisfaction derived from him is moral, intellectual, and emotional at the same time, as it should be. As the years go by, I have found, there is more and more in the Forsyte Saga which one rejects because somehow one feels that all is not right. "Reading Galsworthy again—or most of him, for all is too much," said Lawrence in his day; and rightly; which I quote merely to show that I do not stand alone.

Further, one is never conscious, in Homer, of the attempt to embellish stylistically what he has to say. Galsworthy, on the other hand, is inordinately fond of stylistic embellishments; this is, essentially, an attempt at upholstering his subject matter. Nor are these embellishments always in good taste. The zeugma (I use the word in the sense of the general reader, neglecting the distinction, which is after all purely grammatical, between zeugma and syllepsis) becomes in his hands, not a mere example of worn-

out humour in Fowler's sense, but an offence. "The ballet was on its last legs and night." "Val clenched fists and resolution." "In this laudable mood and the Place de la Concorde."[2] These are examples chosen at random; they could be multiplied indefinitely; and they would be of no importance if they did not portray a flaw in the artistic essence which we call Galsworthy. They betray a striving after cheap effect.

Even a striving after cheap effect would be of no importance if it were not yoked with high pretensions. But, talking of the demand of editors for "pep" and the "sting in the tail" of the short story Galsworthy has this to say: "The inveterately independent will resist these blandishments, go their own ways, imitate no-one. They may achieve results as little to the taste of the market as these tales;[3] but at least they will fail after their own hearts and probably end by getting very high prices for their merchandise." (What a Forsytean ring in those last words!) "Independence is the state best worth having in life; and such as believe they can achieve it in their later tales by servitude to fashion in their youthful efforts are doomed, I fear, to the drinking of bitter waters." "Like some long caravan bearing merchandise of sorts, the tales of a writer wind, through the desert of indifference, towards the oasis of public favour. Whether they ever arrive or drift to death among the shifting sands of popular taste, lies on the knees of the gods—their author has no say. When he has mustered and sent them forth, he may retire and squat afresh on the carpet of vision, having done all he can."

Brave words, these. But . . . the zeugma? A cheap effect? An effect?

But is it not quite true that every artist is primarily concerned with creating an effect?

The artist has received a revelation. He has *seen*. I use the word "sight," of course, as the type of any sort of perception, in its literal as well as its figurative sense. That sight he wants to perpetuate. No matter how accurately he tries to reproduce what *he* saw, he may fail to force the "public" to see it *as* he saw it. That may or may not be the fault of his method of reproduction. It may also be the fault of the public's lack of accurate or painstaking vision. If it is the former, he will disappear from the scene, no matter how valuable his own perception may have been. If the latter, he will ultimately triumph; for sooner or later those will come along who, by some trick of their mental, emotional, or moral composition, are predisposed to see as he saw and who needed only the stimulus of a vision akin to that dormant in them, in order to have that dormant vision made vital. But even these the artist must not, in creating, consciously have in mind. If he does and if he is, for instance, a writer, he will be tempted to write down to them.

[2]Throughout this article quotations from the Saga are taken from the Scribner edition of the first three novels, with their interludes, in one volume. The above will be found on pages 360, 492, and 530, respectively.

[3]The short stories collected under the title *Caravan* (Scribner).

There is only one thing the artist must focus his mind upon; and that is the revelation he has received. At all times, in all circumstances, he must keep his eye "on the object," to use a Goethean phrase. The moment he shifts his eye, if ever so partially, on him who is going to view his creation, he is bound to "Falsify his revelation" (Lamb). In other words, he must imagine, as the one to whom to address himself, a being exactly similar to himself in his endowment of vision. That being I have elsewhere called the true critic.

In the case of the writer, especially the facile, fecund writer, there is the everlasting temptation to attract the attention of the reader by some adventitious device: a clever turn of speech, a witticism, a too striking metaphor fundamentally false, a slang word, and a thousand others. All these are not only often in bad taste; they are an offence against artistic integrity: as if, in acting the leading part in a comedy, the actor, to make sure of his laugh, winked at the audience. No matter how hard cleverness of expression may be to achieve, in a work of art it is always a cheap effect; it is for that reason that merely clever things are so perishable; the cleverness of today is the stupidity of tomorrow.

But even that is not all. The striving after cleverness of expression, as after any other cheap effect, condemns the author, in the long run, as a moral entity. The wink at the audience, to resume that metaphor, argues a lack of absorption in the task which is the writer's. It argues a lack of high seriousness—even though that seriousness may be directed towards making an audience laugh.

Other clever devices might be discussed. None is so significant as the use of the zeugma. As a merely verbal device it is so neat, so compact, so readily comprehended; it so obviously withdraws the attention of the reader from the object to the mode of expression. The reader is so undeniably expected to break his mental vision, to give a laugh, to slap his thigh, to exclaim, "I like that!"

"In this laudable mood and the Place de la Concorde!" Great, isn't it? What a writer!

All of which would be more or less irrelevant if it did not go deeper.

There is a zeugma in Galsworthy's work which affects the whole moral validity of the Saga.

With unerring instinct D. H. Lawrence laid his finger on this fundamental flaw in the construction of the work; and yet, in my opinion, he failed to explain it. Lawrence was a genius in his own right. When it comes to a question of integrity, I should be inclined to back him every time. But, apart from being a novelist, he was also a preacher; and, because he condemned the Forsytes, he condemned the work that depicted them, acknowledging, it is true, that it contained the makings of a very great satire. But why a satire? Whatever is, is by the mere fact of its being entitled to a treatment such as I have ventured to call tragic. I believe that, very largely, Lawrence's failure to find his way to an expla-

nation of the flaw in the construction of the Forsyte Saga was due to the fact that he opposed convention to tradition. He felt himself standing within a tradition and was opposed to any convention. But in a sense tradition and convention are one. A convention is merely the momentary expression of a tradition; it is the often mistaken, the often outlived expression of that tradition.

The ultimate purpose or aim of any great tradition is the promotion of the fulness of life; the purpose of a convention is the exclusion of what, in the view of a given age, interferes with that fulness of life. A tradition is essentially positive; it rests on biological foundations. A convention is essentially negative, even though its commandments may be expressed in positive terms; it rests on the limited interpretation, on the part of a given age and society, of that tradition. A tradition includes within itself the germs of change and development; its very power depends on the possibility of change; a convention, by the mere fact that it is devised to lay down positive law to those mentally, emotionally, and morally incompetent, attempts to make itself permanent and absolute. "Do this, do that," or, more commonly, "Don't do this, don't do that"; if you do, you place yourself outside the pale. Tradition and convention should co-operate, the convention being the provisional expression of the tradition. At times they do co-operate. But convention, like the soldier who has received an order and carries it out even when the conditions under which it was given have changed so as to make it absurd, goes on imposing its taboos even when their opposite has become indicated by tradition. Conventions hate to abdicate, both in space and time. But to break a convention may be to obey the highest law of a tradition. The breaker of a convention may be a hero; the breaker of a tradition is a sinner.

Lawrence saw that the rotten spot in the fruit of the Forsyte Saga lies in the very core of the incident which determines what little motion there is in the picture, namely the Irene-Bosinney entanglement.

May I be permitted a brief digression?

There are two types of geometry: Euclidean and non-Euclidean. Let me take as the representative of the non-Euclidean types—several are possible—that of Riemann in which two parallel lines meet and the sum of the angles in a triangle is always more than two right angles. If we accept the axioms of Euclid, his geometry is perfectly consistent; and under ordinary circumstances there is no need for any other geometry. It is true, there are in reality no straight lines; in fact, there are no lines in the terms of his definition. But it does not matter. These things are abstractions, valid because, when we apply Euclidean geometry to practical matters on not too large a scale, we get, within the limits of the experimental error, valid results. Theoretically as well as in practical application, approximately, the Pythagorean theorem is true. In other words, within the limitations of a given view of the universe, Euclid's geometry enables the human mind to grasp the universe as a whole in one imaginative survey;

and that has, so far, proved the ultimate test for anything which, from time to time, we call truth.

The trouble is that facts emerge which force us to change our view of the universe; and so Riemann had the fruitful idea of building a geometry on non-Euclidean assumptions. Based on the assumption that parallel lines meet and that, therefore, the sum of the angles in a triangle is not two right angles, his geometry proved as consistent as Euclidean geometry—as capable, therefore, of furnishing us with a model of the universe which the human mind can grasp in a single imaginative survey. By the above test Riemann's geometry is as true as Euclid's. Every theorem in it is as true as the contradictory theorem in Euclid. An amazing fact. But. . .

You cannot mix the two. Under given circumstances you must use one or the other; you cannot use both.

It is, of course, perfectly legitimate to show where we should be led if, up to a certain point, we used one and henceforth the other. It may be a highly interesting and fruitful attempt even if its result were merely to lay bare the nature of the confusion inevitable when we use different standards and methods of measurement.

The point of this digression lies in this—that different conventions for the regulation of conduct may be likened to different systems of geometry; for it is not presumed, in what precedes, that either of the two geometries is true in a metaphysical sense. Both represent conventional ways of looking at things. That, metaphysically, either should be true, is most unlikely.

Similarly, no convention is morally right; no convention is strictly coincident with a fundamental tradition. Every convention, strictly speaking, is perhaps comparable to a tangent drawn to a curve: the curve representing the tradition which, being teleological, can never become straight. At least, to express myself more cautiously, it is most unlikely that any convention should ever become collinear with the tradition. It might conceivably be; but all experience speaks against it.

Now there are two contradictory conventions that regulate, or aim at regulating, sexual relations. One is the old established Victorian convention, at present on the defensive; the other is an emergent convention, at present on the offensive. Which of these is morally right—that is, which of them conforms more nearly to the trend of the western tradition to promote the fulness of life—we cannot, at present, tell. Morals are merely —a system of ethics is merely—a device used by fallible man to follow a tradition.

One of these two conventions places a vow above the urge of life; the other places the urge of life above the vow. One says, thou shalt not commit adultery; the other says, thou shalt not continue to live in a state of marriage when the urge of life impels you to break it. One says, he or she to whom you have given a vow must ever after have the right of way over all others; the other says, he or she who holds forth a greater fulfilment

of your desire must have the right of way over him or her to whom a mere vow was given. One says, to break the marriage vow is sin; the other says, in certain circumstances not to break it is the sin of sins. One says, to break the marriage vow is a defilment of the moral law; the other says, not to break it is a defilement of a higher moral law.

Let it be proposed to prove a given proposition in geometry. It is my privilege to choose the system of geometry within which I care to prove it. I can choose Euclid; I can choose Riemann; I can choose any other system if other there be. I may even choose one system for the preliminary steps; another, for the final steps if it serves my purpose. But I must clearly show which, at any moment, I am using. If I don't, intellectual confusion is bound to result.

Similarly, it is clearly the novelist's privilege to cast his picture of human experience within the mould of any convention, even a hypothetical one. But there must be no doubt about which of all possible ones is the measure by which the actors in the drama are to be judged. He may even consider one as valid for one part, another for another part of the action; or he may show one as valid for one group of his characters; another, for another group. But he must make it clear beyond the possibility of a doubt which of them, at a given moment, is to be applied. If he doesn't, a moral confusion is bound to result. Such a moral confusion, as I mean to show, does result in the Forsyte Saga.

But there is worse to come. Suppose the geometrician used the different systems of geometry promiscuously, without being aware of the fact that he changes from one to the other—which would be a zeugma far from being merely verbal—what would become of the intellectual validity of his result? What indeed!

But since the novelist does not deal with abstractions, but with human character in relation to human character; and since the contact of human character with human character, and their interaction upon each other, is the very realm of what we call morals, no novelist can, at any time, free himself from some system of morality. That, it seems to me, is axiomatic.

As a novelist and a critic, I am a latitudinarian. In a work of art, I can accept the most rigid conventionalism and the most absolute laxity—provided always that the treatment of the moral aspect is consistent. I do not, in that, refer to subject matter. As far as subject matter is concerned, whatever is, whoever lives, the most moral and the most immoral, form the legitimate subject matter of the novelist; and nobody will deny that the total view which human society presents today is, to the extent of one half, determined by its conduct *in rebus sexualibus*. It probably has determined that view in the past as well; and it forms, therefore, legitimate subject matter for the novelist. But this freedom is subject to one restriction: the subject matter must be treated within the frame of some clearly-grasped and clearly-definable system of morality; or it can form only an aspect of chaos. As I said before, even chaos may be depicted, provided we, as

readers, are clearly conscious of the fact that we are looking at chaos; that, what we see, must be judged as the result of the chaotic clash of many moralities some of which may be contradictory. Hardy, in *Tess*, tried to show such a clash of at least two, more likely three moralities or conventions, one of which remains unconscious; he repeated the experiment in *Jude;* in both cases he, as the novelist, came out triumphant. A novelist may come out triumphant even when Hardy's dictum that a writer, taking the long view, must "side with the angels" is an absurdity to him: Brantome did.

But, no matter what the system of morality underlying a work of fiction may be, there must, firstly, be no doubt about it in the reader's mind; there must, secondly, be no confusion in the writer's standards; there must, thirdly, be no vacillation in the adherence of the characters shown—unless, indeed, that vacillation forms part of the theme; unless, in other words, that vacillation is perceptible as such. I use the word "vacillation" in contradistinction to "evolution"—which includes in its meanings that properly called "devolution"—which forms the subject of almost every great work of fiction.

When one analyses the Forsyte Saga, one is struck by a singular fact. Here is a novel running into many hundred thousand words with one single initial impulse or dynamic factor. That impulse is comprised in the development of the triangle Soames-Irene-Bosinney. The rest of the novel is static.

The love of Irene for Bosinney thereby assumes a prominence and importance which forces us again and again to scrutinize it from every possible point of view. The result of that scrutiny is that this central figure of Irene—in spite of the author's elaborate attempts at making her clear to us—eludes our grasp, intellectually, emotionally, morally.

Galsworthy tries to excuse himself. "The figure of Irene," he says, "—never present, as the reader may probably have noticed, except through the senses of other characters—is a concretion of disturbing Beauty impinging on a possessive world."

Is it? And, "never present except through the senses of other characters"? Has Galsworthy forgotten that he records her exact words hundreds of times? That he tries scores of times to present her directly without ever succeeding?[4] Always pleading her cause?

It is true, of course, that he often shows how others react to Irene: Swithin, Montague Dartie, James, Jolyon, George, June, and everybody else. It is true, too, that this method occasionally yields a suddenly illuminating word, such as that where James, pleading for Soames, has had the last word and yet "felt as if he had not had the last word."

But that is merely part of the technique of the whole work: everybody on the stage is looked at by everybody else; and we are successively made to look at all figures through the eyes of others. This indirection of the

[4] *The Man of Property*, chapter v; chapter vi; to mention no more.

presentation is often very subtle and, on the whole, of extraordinary effectiveness. Why does it fail with those two central figures Irene and Bosinney? Bosinney is perhaps intentionally left in the background, as well he may be. Why, then, is it that there remains about Irene, no matter in what situation she is presented, something vague, something intangible, something molluscoid which, if it does not, yet continually seems to, change its shape?

One might argue, as Galsworthy does, that, representing the principle of "Beauty impinging on a possessive world," she is seen only by those who do not understand her, therefore dimly only and in distortion, as something that threatens the Forsyte world, as, almost, the enemy who is never seen with an unbiased look. That would hold good were it not for one fact, namely that, through every Forsyte's view of her, we see the author's view of her; and the author does not see her clearly himself because he sees with the eye of one who is in love with his own creation. Since she is the principle hostile to the Forsyte world, every Forsyte view of her should be a caricature, just as every Forsyte view of Bosinney is. But, being in love with her himself, the author cannot permit that; he subtly falsifies the Forsyte view—the view of one convention—by merely superimposing it on his own view of her. The thing is even still more crucial. Some of the Forsytes —old Jolyon in the eyes of his butler[5]—come amazingly, startlingly to life. In fact, everything is often clear to the point of artistic perfection—till Irene enters. All would be well if now they remained Forsytes. But no; they are suddenly haunted—not by the uneasiness which may overcome the most hardened materialist when confronted with what transcends material values—but by what the author wishes us to think of her. I, for one, am on occasion almost disgusted; I resent the fact that my own judgment, which I want to be free, is constantly being directed, constantly being interfered with, by a not very skilful, by a not very scrupulous advocate's plea.

This goes so far that the author won't, on occasion, let us look at other figures unguided. Take Soames. Not a lovable character, granted; tragic because imbued with the wish to be loved. But, then, most of us are not very lovable—to most others. But who is there, in the novel, who does even ordinary justice to him, except perhaps Emily and James. Young Jolyon has, of course, special reasons for disliking him. Yet the choice of words in which his view of him is given[6] contains, not so much an indictment of Soames, as a plea in defence of Irene. It offends; more especially as coming from young Jolyon whom we are asked, a little to our surprise, to accept more or less as Irene's male counterpart.

Sometimes the obviousness of the thing becomes almost admirable in its naivety. Irene, to the author, is simply perfection. In order to make

[5]End of part I, chapter III of *The Man of Property*.
[6]*In Chancery*, part I, chapter VIII, 395.

us accept his view of her he shrinks from nothing. Yet it is vital for perfection to be integral.

It is impossible to distinguish between perfection in one realm and imperfection in another unless that imperfection is acknowledged. It is fashionable, of course, as a matter of reaction to the Victorian ideal of goodness, to insist on aesthetic value as separate from moral value. It is not only fashionable but perfectly legitimate to insist on the novelist's right to depict whatever enters into his view of life. Life is rarely perfectly moral. But to be abstractly perfect, even perfect beauty must be perfectly moral, within some system of morality.

The Forsyte Saga, and even the Irene-Soames entanglement, might have been written without introducing Bosinney at all. Personally I think it unfortunate that Galsworthy chose to introduce him. So far as Soames was concerned, it would perhaps have been even more interesting if the disintegration of his marriage by reason of the absence of "sex attraction in one partner to a union" had been shown without introducing a definite sex attraction to another, to complete the traditional and somewhat trivial triangle.

On the other hand, once Bosinney was introduced, it was imperative that Irene should leave Soames before "it came to pass that they loved in deed as well as in thought";[7] or that she should stand, in the narrative, as what she is, namely a common adulteress.

The confusion of two conventions becomes, at this point, almost painful; it is, perhaps best shown by scrutinizing Bosinney's conduct rather than Irene's; for Bosinney stands definitely within the convention which, for want of a better concise word, I will call the Bohemian convention.

Why a man, who allows the woman he loves to remain in the house of her husband, should commit suicide or be distracted to the point of insanity by what happens to Irene is not very obvious. Had he insisted on her coming to him the moment it had become clear that between him and this woman there was a definite "sex attraction," and had she declined to do so, the flaw in her character must have become undeniable even to a man madly in love. But we are to believe that he considered Soames's action (which I do not mean to defend; to say the least, it is "messy") as something so much against nature as to make life no longer worth living to him when it has taken place; and that yet he had been content, before Soames

[7]It is, by the way, characteristic of Galsworthy and very repulsive to me that this statement should be made between father and son, wrapt up in circumlocution; it should have been left to inference or said directly. *To Let*, part III, chapter I.

[8]"Who gave you that?" he (Swithin) asked.

"Soames."

The Man of Property, part I, chapter III.

"Where do you get your things?" he (James) said in an aggravated voice. "I never see Rachel and Cicely looking half so well. That rose-point, now, that's not real."

Irene came close, to prove to him that he was in error.

Ibid., part I, chapter VI.

acted, to leave the woman he loved, not so much in the power and possession of another to whom a woman *was* a possession, but in a position where she had to accept from that other man all that he should have been giving her himself, bed and board, to put it crudely (only crude expressions fit the case), and that without giving anything in return.[8]

This, of course, contains an indictment equally grave against Irene.

Yet, the moment Irene comes into the question, Galsworthy is blind; Bosinney, at least, he does not defend directly. But we must swallow the lady whole even if we have to cram her down our throats.

Even as the story stands, it would, of course, remain a perfectly legitimate subject for the novelist, provided he did not deliberately attempt to confuse the reader's clear moral feeling. We could accept it in almost any interpretation except the one which he vainly labours to impose upon us. As it stands, the thing is *louche;* I search vainly for an English word to describe it.

That Galsworthy himself was at least dimly aware of the fact is shown in such passages as that in which Irene declines Soames's gift of a birthday present; or that in which Old Jolyon ruminates: "No, she would certainly have died rather than take another penny from *him*"; the italics stand for Soames, of course. But these two passages come a bit late in the day.

Our suspicion is aroused; and we can't see Irene any longer without scrutinizing her every act; as for instance her attitude in the Jon-Fleur episode. "His mother would look at him [Jon] with such a patient sadness . . . as if she were reserving her defence." Between mother and son, that becomes offensive; considering what we know of the mother, it becomes unclean.

Such a moral confusion may pass for the moment, hidden or at least overshadowed by the brilliance with which the static Forsytes are presented; it cannot stand up against the scrutiny of the decades, not to say centuries. It is a challenge to every critic; it is also a test.

Lawrence, of course, goes too far when he denies Galsworthy the right to depict the Forsytes without depicting their real counterpart. Forsyte and anti-Forsyte might have been stewed in their own juices. Perhaps it would have been better, as Lawrence postulates, if their Saga had been treated throughout as a huge satire. But it seems to me that what is wanting is not so much "some conception of a real man and a real woman" (though it might have done the trick), but some definite, clearly defined or clearly definable moral standard. In the eyes of both conventions which I have outlined, Irene and Bosinney stand condemned; and even that would have been acceptable were it not that we are constantly asked, not only to condone their conduct, but to admire it.

THE *MORCEAU DE FANTAISIE* IN VERSE: A NEW APPROACH TO COLLINS

WYLIE SYPHER

NO one has known precisely what to make of the poetry of William Collins. He obviously wrote, in part, a mechanical sort of eighteenth-century verse. What is harder to speak of, however, is his poetical character, a visionary disorder that by its psychic representations may amount occasionally to surrealism. The academic critics have proclaimed that his "imagination" betokens the onset of "romanticism." Dr. Johnson probably did much better than they when he mentioned "the grandeur of wildness" in Collins, who, he said, "delighted to rove through the meanders of inchantment."

The problem is to define more narrowly than by terms like "romanticism" the strangeness of Collins, the very texture of whose verse is "the shadowy tribes of mind," and to situate him exactly within the eighteenth century. In Collins' "unreal scene" with its "visions wild" of Fancy the dislocation of "shadowy shapes" is not merely bizarre but even disconcerting. The imagery, very oblique in literary allusion, reverts to preconscious levels. Take, for example, the Eden in which Milton's "evening ear" heard its "native strains" dropping from the clouds:

> High on some Cliff, to Heav'n up-pil'd,
> Of rude Access, of Prospect wild,
> Where, tangled round the jealous Steep,
> Strange Shades o'erbrow the Valleys deep,
> And holy Genii guard the Rock,
> Its Glooms embrown, its Springs unlock. . . .

The vision of Blake may be more intense, but it is not so fantastic and regressive, so transposed into a dream-work. The bat in the "Ode to Evening" flies so darkling that Yvor Winters deems it a reference to non-existent symbolic values, signal of a melancholy that "verges on disorder, and which at all times is far too profound to arise from an evening landscape alone." Mr. Winters does not further explore this reference to non-existent values, though the eighteenth-century arts often made such reference, and with the same effect verging on disorder—whether from seizure by black melancholy or not.

However "shadowy" the fantasy may be, the visions of Collins are highly plastic. The haphazard array of personifications is sculpturesque, and animated by the gestures of melodrama. Chromatically, the effects in Collins are often tactful, as in the "Ode to Evening" or the "Poetical Character" ode just quoted; although in the "Ode to Pity" the "robes of tend'rest blue" may recall the acid *bleu Nattier* of the rococo. Yet Collins is not unique within the period in his sensitivity to chromatic nuance. His singularity is more apparent in a plastic fantasy at once substantial and

insubstantial, that is disarranged without being formless. Indeed, the basic ambiguity within Collins is one of order-disorder.

Collins' plastic fantasy of approximate and dynamic order needs to be associated with a special development within the decorative arts that occurred between 1730 and 1750, a development recently treated by Fiske Kimball in his authoritative *Creation of the Rococo*. Collins represents a similar development in English verse. As Mr. Kimball points out, the rococo does not, except in certain furniture, express itself freely in England. Rather, it evolves within the decorative arts of the France of Louis XV. Chiefly under the influence of designs by J.-A. Meissonnier and Nicolas Pineau a distinctive extravagance, called the *genre pittoresque*, carried rococo to its most brilliant arrangements just at the time when Collins was writing.

We are concerned primarily with the whole group of eighteenth-century designers of *morceaux de caprice*, as they were called—with *cahiers* of fantastic ornaments, canopies, trellises, fountains, and bizarre scenes that inspired the gayest passages in rococo architecture. These *morceaux de caprice* were often adaptations of the cartouche almost baroque in plasticity, theatrical in their dynamic asymmetry, and fantastic in conception to the degree of freakishness.

In earlier rococo motifs, even amid the intricacies of scrolls, interlaces, and acanthus swirls, there was symmetry. About 1730, with Meissonnier and Pineau, appeared the *genre pittoresque*, or, as it was termed, *le contraste dans les ornemens*. This taste for the *rocaille* or *coquillage* had already been seen in arabesques by Watteau—designs of singeries, grottoes, gardens, seasons, elements. In 1734 was issued a *Livre d'Ornemens* by Meissonnier: "des Fontaines, des Cascades, des Ruines, des Rocailles, et Coquillages, des morceaux d'Architecture qui font des effets bizarres, singuliers et pittoresques, par leurs formes piquantes et extraordinaires, dont souvent aucune partie ne répond à l'autre." Many of these designs, called by Mr. Kimball "half plastic, half visionary," assumed the forms of bulbous pavilions, extravagant reverse curves, broken scrolls, distorted pilasters, airy trellis-like canopies, portentous cascades, and titanic spiral stairways. Shortly after was printed another collection of fantastic pieces by Jacques de la Joue—wildly asymmetrical fountains, terraces and stairways in sharp perspective, half-oriental sultana's baths, exotic thrones, improvisations upon architecture, broken and flickering cartouches, allegorical figures dramatically situated. The effect is that of Piranesi transposed into rococo. There were many other *cahiers* of similar designs by Boucher, Peyrotte, Blondel, Mondon, Babel, Girard, and de Cuvilliès. Together with capricious irregularity and high plasticity, the *compartment d'ornement* has a movement that is theatrical; frequently a cartouche, like a proscenium, will open upon asymmetrical grottoes, fountains, canopies, or other egregiously strange *formes piquantes*, sometimes with a note of exoticism or

singerie, and interspersed sculpturesque gods, fauns, nymphs, loves, or allegorical figures.

Across the Channel the *genre pittoresque* was no less eccentric, though less practiced. Chippendale's girandoles and shields for pediments, of course, are as fantastic and plastic as anything among *morceaux de caprice*. Engravers like J. Ingram were reproducing de la Joue's suites of figures and ornaments—Architecture, Eloquence, Music, Optics, and so on. For the very many English interested in prints Mathias Lock prepared his *New Drawing Book of Ornaments, Shields, Compartments, Masks, &c.* (1752). George Bickham's designs for songs like "Bright Cynthia" and "The Inamour'd Swain," or Thomas Johnson's *One Hundred & Fifty New Designs* (1761)—particularly his designs for clock cases and frames—betray the irresponsibility and inward disorder of the rococo impulses, communicated with more sinister tones in the Italian painters known as *capricci* and in the almost surrealist disarrangement of the Chinese-Gothic garden. One of the persistent rococo inclinations was toward disorder.

The verse of Collins, falling as it does almost all between 1740 and 1750, represents a comparable rococo development in poetry—the *morceau de fantaisie*, half plastic, half visionary, having affinities with the baroque but remaining distinctively *genre pittoresque*. If Collins were a French poet, the association would doubtless long ago have been made. Dr. Johnson comes very near in writing of Collins' delight in "those flights of imagination which pass the bounds of nature. . . . He loved fairies, genii, giants, and monsters; he delighted to rove through the meanders of inchantment, to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces, to repose by the water-falls of Elysian gardens." The "grandeur of wildness, and the novelty of extravagance" in both Collins and the *genre pittoresque* signify an infirmity of constructive ability, the improvisation of the rococo, which remained "decorative." Just as in 1754 Cochin repudiated the *genre pittoresque* as *désordre*, Johnson in 1763 regretted Collins' "quest of mistaken beauties."

Responsive as he was to plastic effect, Collins relies heavily in his odes upon a dramatic kind of classical iconography, as in "The Passions" or "The Manners," a "train" of personifications almost sculpturesque and arranged irregularly if not confusedly. Collins himself, curious about prints and skilled in drawing, conceived as decoration a medallion with "two elegant Heads à l'antique"—

> . . . over the lower part of the necks of which there shall be a veil thrown, from under which a little *Art* shall appear writing on a Roman scroll, & a Satyr either in contrast holding up another, or writing on part of the same, or suppose the veil to be upheld by Friendship, who may at the same time point to the Relievo of the medallion while she discovers the ornaments of the base by supporting the veil.

With its plasticity, its animation, its visionary effect, and its asymmetrical arrangement this design is almost a *morceau de caprice*. And the prose sketch by Joseph Warton from which Collins evidently developed the "Passions" ode might appear in the *oeuvre* of Meissonnier as a *jeu d'artifice*.

Among the subtler values of the *compartment d'ornement* was aerial perspective, to which Collins was unusually sensitive; in the "Verses to Sir Thomas Hanmer" he vizualizes an "expressive picture."

> Methinks ev'n now I view some free Design,
> Where breathing Nature lives in ev'ry Line:
> Chast and subdu'd the modest Lights decay,
> Steal into Shade, and mildly melt away.

The hamlets brown, dim spires, and gradual dusky veil of the "Ode to Evening" are the consummation of this rococo aerial perspective, which, of course, owes a great deal to Claude. More characteristic of the *morceau de caprice* is the visionary confusion of classical, gothic, and oriental, like the fabric of Collins' temple of Liberty:

> In Gothic Pride it seems to rise!
> Yet Graecia's graceful Orders join,
> Majestic thro' the mix'd Design.

The "Highland Superstitions" ode is of astonishingly mixed design.

The "world unknown" of the "Ode to Fear" is crowded with the capricious distorted shapes of the *maitres ornementistes:*

> Ah Fear! Ah frantic Fear!
> I see, I see Thee near.
> I know thy hurried Step, thy haggard Eye!

And with Fear comes Danger with "limbs of giant mold" like the fauns writhing about Boucher's fountains; Danger,

> Who stalks his Round, an hideous Form,
> Howling amidst the Midnight Storm,
> Or throws him on the ridgy Steep
> Of some loose hanging Rock to sleep:
> And with him thousand Phantoms join'd. . . .

These ridgy steeps with loose hanging rocks are in the "dim discover'd tracts of mind" where the cascades, grottoes, and vistas of the *morceau de caprice* compose only by a psychic distortion of spatial relationship, a displacement of form fantastic rather than monumental, rococo rather than baroque. No matter what Collins may owe to Milton (the hideous form of Danger, for example, may be Miltonic) the accomplishment of the "Ode to Fear" is of a rococo, not a baroque, order—a "rococo romanticism" with its special plausible irreality, to use Fiske Kimball's term. The relation between the uncertain orientalism of the "Persian Eclogues" and the prevailing singerie in design is too evident to stress.

Perhaps the most characteristic structural effect of the eighteenth-century allegorical ode is asymmetry. The ambivalence of order-disorder gives Collins' odes their "wildness" and indeterminate course. Collins' intent to "revive the just designs of Greece" may have dictated the academic facade of the odes—strophe, antistrophe, epode—and, possibly, his learned allusions and conventional apostrophes, personifications, and

epithets, much as the *compartment d'ornement* used passages in classical architecture. Collins' themes, too, were bookish—tragic fear, pity, simplicity. This academic exterior corresponds, perhaps, to the academic exteriors of buildings whose interiors were elaborated into the fantastic irregularities of the *genre pittoresque*. The academic "exterior" of the odes does not, however, control their internal (or textural) development, which is asymmetrical. The correspondences are approximate, not exact. The movement is so uncertain as to cause bewilderment. Progress occurs by indirection. Take, for instance, the free associations developed through the "Ode on the Poetical Character" as contrasted to the purported order of its three divisions, no one of which maintains its direction more consistently than does the poem as a whole. The "Ode to Fear" within its academic dimensions of strophe, epode, and antistrophe extravagates into erratic personification, then into an improvisation upon Sophocles, and finally into an incoherent exhortation to Fear herself. Traditionally, the developments within the pindaric are tangential; yet the articulation here is almost casual. Thus, by a tectonics of caprice elements within the structural units themselves are balanced "occultly." Reference is ambiguous, if not random. The symbolism—genii, monsters, waterfalls, and golden palaces—is at once visionary and plastic. The personifications seem extravagant because of their high sculptural realization and their exclamatory presentation:

> Whilst Vengeance, in the lurid Air,
> Lifts her red Arm, expos'd and bare.

The odes, like the *cahiers*, "font des effets bizarres, singuliers et pittoresques, par leurs formes piquantes et extraordinaires, dont souvent aucune partie ne répond à l'autre." Not being of large proportion, they remain within the limits of the rococo.

If the verse of Pope can be said to correspond to an earlier stage of rococo—a surface arabesque of "delicate linear organism"—Collins, with his fine madness, cast into fantastic derangement the plastic visions that had better be called *genre pittoresque* than romantic.

OFF-STAGE SOUNDS

ARTHUR COLBY SPRAGUE

THERE is a fine moment at the close of Mr. Paul Osborne's recent play, *A Bell for Adano*. Major Joppolo, deprived of his command, is leaving the town he has befriended. More dispiriting than the sense of his personal humiliation is the knowledge that all he had achieved is now jeopardized. Sadly he moves toward the door, and just as he reaches it stops short. For a great sonorous bell has begun to ring, *the* bell longed for by the townspeople and got for them at last with so much difficulty by him—symbol, half-ironic, half-triumphant, of his life in Adano and of all that he has tried to do there.

No wonder, I thought afterwards, that we in the audience had been so deeply moved! Nor had the effect been gained by mere trickery. For we had already heard about the installation of the bell and the chance that it might be rung for the first time on this same afternoon. The method of preparation had been followed, not that of surprise.

Other off-stage sounds came to mind at once. I remembered my first Tchekov play, many years ago in London. It was *The Cherry Orchard*, which I had not then read—a puzzling, fascinating play unlike any I had ever seen. Near the close, the stage was empty, the family gone at last. There was a long pause, then the sound of chopping. The cherry orchard . . . and in my innocence I confess it seemed to me the right, the perfect ending. Only, the sound continued. Firs, the old family servant, has been left behind, locked in, forgotten. And with his entrance the mood of sympathy which had possessed me vanished, giving place to one wholly different.[1]

It is noteworthy that each of these off-stage sounds introduces new action profoundly at variance with what had been taking place just before. In both cases, too, the audience make the connection between sound and action for themselves. In both, finally, the sound bears an import beyond the mere fact of its occurrence. Through off-stage sound, then, a dramatist may accomplish more than one thing at a time, as in this most exacting of artistic forms he must do over and over again if he is to succeed at all.

No off-stage sound in recent times is more widely remembered than that of the distant drum in *The Emperor Jones*. The effect is by no means an adventitious one. Mr. O'Neill has told in some detail of the complex origins of the play. He had been reading about "the religious feasts in the Congo and the uses to which the drum is put there: how it starts at a normal pulse and is slowly intensified until the heartbeat of everyone present corresponds to the frenzied beat of the drum. There was an idea

[1]In the present revival the chopping is accompanied by singing. On the contrary, it should be a dull, inhuman sound—that of the destruction of beauty.

and an experiment. How would this sort of thing work on an audience in a theater?"[2] Even as we first hear it—like very distant thunder—the sound is charged with meaning. Jones, still confident, is boasting to Smithers:

Jones. I kin outguess, outrun, outfight, an' outplay de whole lot o' dem all ovah de board any time o' de day er night! You watch me! (*From the distant hills comes the faint, steady thump of a tom-tom, low and vibrating. It starts at a rate exactly corresponding to normal pulse beat—72 to the minute—and continues at a gradually accelerating rate from this point uninterruptedly to the very end of the play*).

(*Jones starts at the sound. A strange look of apprehension creeps into his face—for a moment as he listens. Then he asks, with an attempt to regain his most casual manner*) What's dat drum beatin fo'?

Smithers. (*With a mean grin.*) For you. That means the bleedin' ceremony 'as started.[3]

It is for the Emperor, then, that the drum beats on and on, to cease only when the silver bullets have found their mark.

Several years before, in *Bound East for Cardiff*, O'Neill had employed off-stage sound as a symbol of human destiny. The action of this play takes place in the forecastle of a tramp steamer at sea. Yank, one of the crew, has been fatally injured by a fall. It is a foggy night, and "*at regular intervals of a minute or so the blast of the steamer's whistle can be heard above all other sounds.*" At the end, Cocky, another of the crew, comes in. "The fog's lifted," he says. There is no stage direction; but the wailing whistle would have ceased a little before at the moment of Yank's death.

It is a temptation to consider other modern plays in which the possibilities of this same device have been happily explored: *Rain*, for instance, and *Peter Pan*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *The Pigeon*, *Justice*, *A Doll's House*, and Mr. Coward's *Point Valaine*. The most terrifying off-stage sound I can recall was in a play called *The Lady Who Came to Stay*, produced by Mr. Guthrie McClintic in 1941. In this strange piece, ghosts and horrors so abounded that presently the audience refused any longer to take them seriously. But the moment I have in mind came early and was shocking enough. An evil old woman has been disturbed by strains of music coming from an inner darkened room, music associated with a person thought to be dead. The old woman is not lacking in courage. Head erect, she walks steadily into the haunted room, closing the door behind her. Then, after a long pause, we heard—the frantic scratching of matches. In that sound was more than the sudden fear of the dark. She had sensed the presence of something horrible within. Her nerve had broken.

It was a commonplace of eighteenth-century dramatic criticism to praise the tolling bell in Otway's *Venice Preserved*. This sound interrupts the parting of Jaffeir and Belvidera in the last act. For Belvidera's sake Jaffeir has betrayed Pierre, his dearest friend, to the Venetian authorities.

[2]Interview in the New York *World*, November 9, 1924, quoted in Barrett H. Clark, *Eugene O'Neill: The Man and his Plays* (New York, 1929), 104.

[3]The quotations from *The Emperor Jones* are quoted with the permission of Random House, Inc.

Now, as he draws a dagger to take his own life, the passing-bell tolls for the execution of Pierre. New movement has been imparted to the scene and a new anxiety. When, however, a similar effect was attempted in a later tragedy, *Barbarossa*, Dr. Johnson objected to it as an impropriety: "Otway had tolled a bell before Dr. Browne, and we are not to be made April fools twice by the same trick."[4]

Shakespeare's use of off-stage sounds is a subject in itself. That references to sounds in the text of his plays almost invariably imply their actual simulation in performance, is a point made by the late Mr. W. J. Lawrence in one of the most exciting of his studies, "The Illusion of Sounds in the Elizabethan Theatre." Thus he writes,

> Thunder, the muttering of the storm and the whistling of the wind, the singing of birds, the lowing of cattle, the baying of hounds, the pealing of bells, the galloping of horses, the boom of cannon, and the rattle of musketry—all were well and truly imitated.

And although Shakespeare "had no electric lights to enable him to convey the gradations of the dawn," he could "conjure up all its eeriness by the simple crowing of a cock."[5]

That this last sound was heard, and not merely talked about, when *Hamlet* was first played, seems almost certain. Moreover, there is reason to believe that the crowing continued well into the eighteenth century, when, allegedly because of unskilful execution, it was discontinued.[6] A delightfully characteristic letter of Edwin Booth's is concerned with the possibility of introducing it again. A certain Buggles had furnished him with an instrument which accurately reproduced the sound.

> I've concluded to dispense with the *Kok* in Hamlet. Therefore I send it to you for the edification of ye twins and the delight of their parents—at early dawn. This remarkable instrument will crow you like any sucking hen, if properly manipulated; but how that's done I'm at a loss to tell. All that I know about it is that its creator, a Mr. Buggles, put it to his lips and set all the cocks a crowing. . . . To aid Buggles and avenge myself on some fraternal foe (or friend) I bought the infernal thing and promised to use it in Hamlet as an especial advertisement for him. After the darling came into my possession and Buggles had vamosed I forgot the secret of its crow, so couldn't use it to scare my Danish daddy's shade. . . . Buggles believes his bully old fortune is made by Booth buying his *blooming* bugle![7]

It might be added that when *Hamlet* was last played in New York (with Mr. Maurice Evans), the distant crowing of a cock was distinctly audible—and it was not in the least ludicrous.

Shakespeare's chief use of off-stage sound is as a means of creating dramatic illusion. But being a skilled craftsman he is quite capable of

[4]Arthur Murphy, *Life of David Garrick* (London, 1801), I, 268. Cf. Davies, *Dramatic Miscellanies* (London, 1784), III, 231; *The Idler*, no. 60, and *The Connoisseur*, no. 23.

[5]*Pre-Restoration Stage Studies* (Cambridge, 1927), 199,200.

[6]Cf. William Cooke, *Memoirs of Samuel Foote* (New York, 1806), II, 205, note; Percy Fitzgerald, *Shakespearean Representation* (London, 1908), 10.

[7]Letter to T. B. Aldrich, quoted in Charles T. Copeland, *Edwin Booth* (Boston, 1901), 126, 127.

accomplishing more than one thing at a time. Thus, the jangling of the alarum bell during the brawl between Cassio and Montano not only adds immeasurably to the excitement of the scene but also, in its effect upon the Moor, suggests by how narrow a margin he is able to maintain his self-control.

> He that stirs next to carve for his own rage
> Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion.
> *Silence that dreadful bell!* It frights the isle
> From her propriety.

Or there is the last scene of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where the clock striking twelve marks the transition to "fairy time" and the reappearance of Puck, a change of plane comparable to that at the beginning of the third act of *Henry V*, where the direction, "*Alarum, and chambers go off*," interrupting the narration of the Chorus, leads us forward to the assault upon Harfleur which immediately follows.

The most famous of off-stage sounds in all drama is, of course, the knocking at the gate in *Macbeth*. Its effect has been considered metaphysically by De Quincey. "Action," he would have us believe, "is best expounded, measured, and made apprehensible, by reaction"; and here, in the Murder Scene, the knocking "makes known audibly that the reaction has commenced . . . and the re-establishment of the goings-on of the world in which we live, first makes us profoundly sensible of the awful parenthesis that had suspended them." There is also the heightening of suspense, and as Mr. Bonamy Dobrée has pointed out, an abrupt change of speed.[8] The sound continues, too, obliterating in its physical reality the petty distinctions of "scenes." That idea was too valuable to be lost even when it was no longer deemed expedient for the ribald porter to appear on the stage and Seyton opened the gate for Macduff. In one of old George Becks's promptbooks, concerning a production with Forrest and Madame Ponisi, is the following note: "The Knocking is kept up—for Macbeth to wash & change—& Seyton not to go on until Macbeth tells him." I find this note suggestive beyond its immediate bearing here. Time "for Macbeth to wash & change". . . . And to fill up the time—the drunken musing of the Porter?

Later in the same play Macbeth visits the Weird Sisters, who warn him against Macduff. Presently, they vanish and Lennox enters:

> *Len.* What's your Grace's will?
> *Macb.* Saw you the Weird Sisters?
> *Len.* No, my lord.
> *Macb.* Came they not by you?
> *Len.* No indeed, my lord.
> *Macb.* Infected be the air whereon they ride,
> And damn'd all those that trust them! I did hear
> The galloping of horse. Who was't came by?

[8] *Histriophone* (London, 1925), 17.

Len. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word
Macduff is fled to England.

Here sound had bespoken the workings of fate. For tragic irony, there is the distant uproar heard while Hamlet is watching on the platform. As he had planned to do, the King is celebrating the "gentle and unforced accord" of his nephew to remain in Denmark, celebrating with draughts of Rhenish, with kettledrums and braying trumpets and the firing of cannon. And while he still "keeps wassail"—the Ghost comes.

The delightfulness of still another sound is scarcely to be appreciated by mere readers. Shakespeare's greatest comic scene is drawing to a close. It is late at night. The extempore play at the Boar's Head has been rudely interrupted by the coming of the Sheriff, "with a most monstrous watch, in hot pursuit of "a gross fat man." Falstaff hides, and Prince Hal puts off the Sheriff with fair promises.

Sher. Good night, my noble lord.
Prince. I think it is good morrow, is it not?
Sher. Indeed, my lord, I think it be two o'clock. *Exit*
Prince. This oily rascal is known as well as Paul's.
Go call him forth.
Peto. Falstaff! Fast asleep behind the arras,
and snorting like a horse.
Prince. How hard he fetches breath.

And while Sir John continues to snore, "*he searcheth his pockets and findeth certain papers*" . . . .

One last off-stage sound has, I think, wholly escaped the vigilance of the commentators. As Shakespeare recast the story of Coriolanus in North's *Plutarch*. the hero on his way to exile is hooted out of Rome. So he himself informs Aufidius; and later, when the peril to the city is greatest, Menenius twice alludes to the same indignity. "You are they," he cries to some of the Plebeians,

That made the air unwholesome when you cast
Your stinking caps in hooting at
Coriolanus' exile.

At the beginning of the fourth act, Coriolanus bids farewell to his wife and mother. Seemingly, they are to accompany him, with Menenius and others, as far as the city gates.

Menenius. Come, let's not weep.
If I could shake off but one seven years
From these old arms and legs, by the good gods,
I'ld with thee, every foot.
Cor. Give me thy hand.
Come. *Exeunt.*

Then, as a new scene begins, the Tribunes enter with an Ædile.

Sicinius. Bid them all home. He's gone, and we'll no further.
The nobility are vex'd, whom we see have sided
In his behalf.
Brutus. Now we have shown our power,
Let us seem humbler after it is done
Than when it was a-doing.
Sicinius. Bid them home.
Say their great enemy is gone, and they
Stand in their ancient strength.

Surely, we should hear the "whooping" of the distant mob just before and during these last speeches. And hearing it we shall be nearer to understanding how this proud Roman could stoop to become a traitor.

MARIA CHAPDELAINE CHEZ ELLE

ALLAN MCANDREW

MARIA CHAPDELAINE is a novel with a history which has been frequently told. In the province of Quebec, Louis Hémon's tale has been discussed in such a way as to give it a special history, that of its reception in French Canada. That reception was marked by three stages: the years from 1916 to 1921 before the book was given a French edition; the period immediately following upon the French editions and the wide diffusion of the novel throughout the world; and more recent times—a period of belated recognition.

French-Canadian criticism of *Maria Chapdelaine* is mainly concerned with the question, to what extent *Maria Chapdelaine* is representative of the province of Quebec; and this question falls into the following principal divisions: religion, life in Quebec, the Canadian soul, the characters.

The general conclusion is inescapable: the verdict of French Canada has not been favourable.[1] It will be apparent, I believe, that the French-Canadian criticism of *Maria Chapdelaine* is frequently irrelevant. The novel has not been studied as a piece of literature; it has been weighed in the balance of the French-Canadian conception of the province of Quebec and has been found wanting, largely because of the stress laid by Louis Hémon on the illiteracy of the characters.[2] Needless to say, different critics have

[1]Articles by Father Lamarche "Retour sur Maria Chapdelaine" *Ebauches critiques*, Ménard, Montreal, 1930; Professor F. C. A. Jeanneret "La Critique littéraire au Canada français," *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, April-June 1943, together with Louvigny de Montigny's book, *La Revanche de Maria Chapdelaine*, Montreal, 1937, substantiate my conclusions.

One might reasonably expect an historian of the French-Canadian novel to study the influence of *Maria Chapdelaine* upon the genre in Canada. The Abbé Albert Dandurand is satisfied with a passing remark that "the most successful works are not always those in which the most violent action is unfolded as *Maria Chapdelaine* very justly demonstrates" (*Le Roman canadien-français*, Montreal, 1937, p. 190).

Despite his sense that "regionalism in Canada is the very expression of the spirit and the soul of an entire race which defends itself against absorption" (*Visages Littéraires du Canada français*, Montreal, 1941, p. 58), Professor A. J. Jobin makes no effort to compare Hémon's interpretation of the Canadian scene with that of French-Canadian writers. He pronounces *Maria Chapdelaine* a fine novel but thinks its popularity might, regrettably, lead the reader to imagine that the entire population of Canada consists only of "pionniers-bûcherons" (p. 149).

[2]Louvigny de Montigny purposes (*La Revanche de Maria Chapdelaine*, p. 17) to study the history of the novel since its publication and to investigate how it has overcome the disfavour it manifestly experienced from the very beginning in Canada. He states that the novel still does not enjoy the popularity it should among the rural population and in the schools, and he feels the lack of appreciation on the part of his compatriots to be humiliating for French Canadians and for the prestige of their civilization. The trenchant tone of *La Revanche de Maria Chapdelaine* reveals the violence of feeling aroused in Quebec by Hémon's novel. Louvigny de Montigny does not escape from extra-literary consider-

focussed their attention on special aspects of the book. Although warm eulogy can be found in the élite of French-Canadian critics, their admiration does not constitute the endorsement of a people or of the literate public.

The unfavourable reaction in Quebec to Hémon's novel strikes the Canadian of English speech as fantastic. We tend to view *Maria Chapdelaine* as a novel of prime importance, as literature depicting the Canadian scene. To us it is a highly interesting document, which moreover gives us a deeply moving picture of the French Canadian. But it is precisely this idea of the novel as a document or picture, which underlies the discomfort of so many French Canadians in the presence of *Maria Chapdelaine*: it is not, in their opinion, the mirror of French Canada, it reflects but one aspect of French-Canadian life. Quite apart from its curiosity as a literary phenomenon, the story of French Canada's reception of *Maria Chapdelaine* is of prime importance in Canada. It casts a revealing if indirect light on the difficulties attendant upon cordial English-French relations in this country.

The first stage in the history of *Maria Chapdelaine* in Canada, before its publication in France and the attendant "intervention" of French criticism, is marked by the admiration of those attached to the *roman du terroir* and by some official approbation.

Maria Chapdelaine was presented with high enthusiasm to Canadian readers by Louvigny de Montigny in 1916. Ernest Bilodeau called the novel "une manière de chef-d'oeuvre":[3] it would live in Canadian literature and the author's name would be cherished by readers of the tale. Father de Grandpré considered the book a milestone in the history of French-Canadian letters.[4] Damase Potvin asserted that "*Maria Chapdelaine* is a lesson for our Canadian novelists."[5] Léon-Mercier Gouin shared without hesitation the view of the Abbé Lionel Groulx that Louis Hémon had produced the best and most Canadian of all Canadian novels.[6] *Le Terroir*, publication of the Société des Arts, Sciences et Lettres de Québec, was much preoccupied with Louis Hémon and his novel between 1918 and 1920.

The dithyrambic praise of *Maria Chapdelaine* by French critics when the novel was first published in France in 1921 initiates the second stage in our history. Hostile criticism of *Maria Chapdelaine* now begins to appear in Quebec. Although the French criticism is far superior to the Canadian, one must remember that the emotion arising out of Canadian participation in the Great War colours the French criticism. Jean Bruchesi stated in the *Action Française* of December, 1921, that the tremendous success

ations since he sets himself the task of proving that nothing in *Maria Chapdelaine* does disservice to the French Canadian. M. Ubald Paquin had complained bitterly in *Le Nationaliste* (May 7, 1922) that *Maria Chapdelaine* does the French Canadian grave injustice because the reader is prone to believe that he sees in it "the faithful portrait of a whole race," and that this race is ignorant and lives under the most primitive conditions.

[3] *Le Nationaliste*, January 7, 1917.

[4] *Le Parler français*, June-August 1917.

[5] "Un Pèlerinage au pays de Maria Chapdelaine," *Le Terroir*, July 1918.

[6] *Le Petit Canadien*, October 1918; *Le Terroir*, December 1918.

which *Maria Chapdelaine* has enjoyed in France was not anticipated when the novel first appeared in 1916.[7] Articles by François Veuillot, the French critic, in the *Action Catholique*[8] reflect both the praise and the hostility shown *Maria Chapdelaine* in France in answer to an attack on the novel which had appeared in that paper. French-Canadian appreciation of the novel, he states, played no small part in the creation of its vogue in France, and French Canadians are now reacting "almost with violence" to the novel's great triumph there.[9] Veuillot denies that a disdainful appraisement of French Canadians as a primitive people provoked the "craze" for the novel.

The Canadian edition of *Maria Chapdelaine* did not find a ready market. According to Louvigny de Montigny the enthusiasm of French critics assisted materially in exhausting the 1200 copies of this edition. A bitter observation in *Le Cœur est le Maître*, by Antonin Proulx, confirms this fact and, incidentally, suggests how purely emotional the attitude of many French Canadians toward *Maria Chapdelaine* has been:

> It was not written by one of us and we would wager indeed that, if it had been, our critics —at least most of them—would have spoken about it only to make fun of it . . . ; that neither René Bazin nor Léon Daudet would have talked about it; that it still would be at the point where Louis Hémon's work was before the dazzling homage of the great French men of letters at a time when it was scarcely sold in the book stores and was not read in the libraries.[10]

If one is to determine the degree of French-Canadian appreciation in terms of book sales it seems clear that the novel was greeted with general indifference. In 1932 Maurice Hébert refers to the 8,000 copies which have been sold in the province of Quebec, contrasting this figure with some 30,000 copies of the English translation sold in the rest of Canada. He adds that "only a chef-d'oeuvre still more Canadian than *Maria Chapdelaine* can give credit to us in France, and through her in the entire world."[11]

As stated at the beginning of this paper French-Canadian criticism of *Maria Chapdelaine* revolves, in general, about the fidelity of the novel to the reality it portrays. The dominant tone of this criticism is argumentative: Hémon should be sent to Coventry for this or that error; critics who are favourable to Hémon sigh with regret over his sins of omission, while rebuking their more vehement countrymen for lack of generosity to him. The French-Canadian critics to whom I have referred, had already pointed out certain alleged flaws likely to arrest the attention of the French-Canadian reader, but had stressed the broad human truth of *Maria Chapdelaine.*

[7]Father Lamarche informs us in "Retour sur *Maria Chapdelaine*," written in 1922, that the term *chef-d'oeuvre* has rarely been applied to the novel (in Canada).

[8]August 9, 10, 1922.

[9]The hostility which Veuillot deprecates can be seen in *La Presse* of January 28, 1924, which gave the opinion of Henri D'Arles that too much had been made of *Maria Chapdelaine.*

[10]Montreal, 1930, p. 107.

[11]*Et d'un Livre à l'Autre*, Montreal, 1932, p. 238.

Foreign criticism, especially French, plunged wholeheartedly into the discussion of the truth of *Maria Chapdelaine*, and thereby became indirectly responsible for the emergence in Quebec of much bad criticism, of much that was not literary criticism at all. Is Hémon open to censure for his depiction of the curé? The reader most certainly will criticize Hémon if the figure of the priest clashes with the ensemble of his impressions as he reads the story. In other words does the priest stand outside the world of psychological truth with which the reader is dealing? Most French-Canadian critics have failed to study *Maria Chapdelaine* from the point of view of psychological truth. They have asked themselves: Is the novel real? Is it a mirror in which we Canadians can see the reflection of Quebec and its people? Their general answer is, no. Many French Canadians believe that Louis Hémon has created a false impression of their province and has not given a picture of the Canadian in general. It has been alleged that Louis Hémon did not understand the deep religious faith of his characters and that his portraits of the curé and the doctor are false. Some French Canadians have detected a fleeting irony in the presentation of these two figures. According to Maurice Hébert, the error of these critics possibly consists in seeking in the novel what its author did not wish to put in it. While French Canadians, he adds, "ruin their eyes" by seeking with a magnifying glass for imperfections in *Maria Chapdelaine*, the novel "remains more noble and more appreciated by those who are not myopes."[12] Ferdinand Bélanger is more vigorous in his defence of the book. Providence is to be thanked for having destined to French Canada "the precocious maturity of this genius, who found the moving image wherein is symbolized, almost perfectly, a whole part of the marvellous work of [our] ancestors."[13]

French-Canadian opinion in respect to Hémon's presentation of religious faith in *Maria Chapdelaine* ranges from the opinion that he has oversimplified the faith of the Canadians because he does not share their beliefs, to assertions that he lacked a Christian background. F. Robert writes:

> When . . . shall we have an artistic writer who will incite admiration for the faith of our people. . . . Until these faithful have been described our conteurs will not have done justice to the national soul. Louis Hémon has tried his hand at this task, but he lacked perhaps the Christian sense to understand a Maria Chapdelaine. And whatever he may say the Canadian paradise is not a sort of fine, essentially concrete palace where a blessed Virgin with a blue ceinture, angels with long pink or green wings and an Eternal Father with a white beard would take it upon themselves to amuse us.[14]

And thus simply because Hémon has described coloured calendars and cheap engravings of sacred subjects, which are to be found in farmhouses, or because he says that the people adore God without subtleness or doubt, or because he writes: "The anniversary of the birth of Jesus becomes for

[12] *De Livres en Livres*, Montreal, 1929, p. 37.
[13] "*Marie Chapdelaine*, Chef-d'Oeuvre Classique," *L'Oeil*, Montreal, August 15, 1944.
[14] "Essai sur les Contes canadiens," *Le Canada Français*, June 1921.

them more than a date or a rite: the renewed redemption, a reason for great joy, and the wooden church is filled with simple fervour and with a prodigious atmosphere of the miraculous."[15] Father de Grandpré holds that, if there is nothing "disrespectful" in *Maria Chapdelaine*, one does not feel in it "the language and the consolations of religion," and to him Louis Hémon seems to see in the practices of the cult mere superstitious rites.[16] Unprejudiced readers of the novel may well wonder whether these critics are not over-sensitive.

In view of the French-Canadians' dissatisfaction with his interpretation of their religion one could not expect that Hémon's portrait of the curé would pass unchallenged. Father de Grandpré finds that he scarcely inspires either respect or love. What, then, is wrong with the curé? It seems to me that the explanation for the general protest against Hémon on the score of the curé lies in the fact he is not an idealized figure, but rather a simple, ignorant priest of peasant stock, devoid of tact in dealing with human sorrow. This curé, we are told, is not typical of the majority of curés. Debate on the matter is quite fruitless, for what is there to prove? After all, the curé is of importance only as part of the setting, and in so far as he contributes to the solution of Maria's problem. The priest, in fact, discharges a normal rôle in a community where the practice of religion looms very large in the lives of the people. There is no inherent clash between the curé and his environment. Louvigny de Montigny finds nothing in the curé of *Maria Chapdelaine* which should arouse indignation against Louis Hémon. He is typical of the sort of pastor to be found on the outer fringes of colonization. "But people will not forgive the novelist who paints them realistically without decorating their brows with the obligatory halo which a minister of our Saviour must wear in any roman de bibliothèque rose."[17]

The most skilful as well as the most recently published discussion of Hémon's alleged clumsiness in the treatment of the curé and the doctor is to be found in "*Maria Chapdelaine* Chef-d'Oeuvre Classique," by Ferdinand Bélanger. M. Bélanger claims that the very creation of *Maria Chapdelaine* is proof that Hémon was well versed in the history of French Canada. The characters, with the exception of the priest and the doctor, are social types. But the failure in the presentation of the curé and the doctor is a serious matter in the *pays de Québec* whose voice is "moitié chant de femme et moitié sermon de prêtre." Here, M. Bélanger maintains, Hémon abandoned

[15]Grasset, 1036e édition, Paris, 1935, p. 98.

[16]*Le Parler français*, June-August 1917. See also Ernest Bilodeau, *Le Nationaliste*, January 7, 1917. Father Lamarche "Retour sur Maria Chapdelaine," *Ebauches Critiques*. Ulric Gauvin, *Le Semeur*, October 1921.

[17]*La Revanche de Maria Chapdelaine*, p. 93. Louis Dantin, in his *Gloses Critiques*, Montreal, 1931, p. 73, protests against the importance attached to the type of criticism which the curé has evoked. See also Jean Bruchesi, *L'Action Française*, December 1921, and Harry Bernard, *Essais Critiques*, Montreal, 1929.

his classical principles, to descend to a "more modern and narrower realism which recalls de Maupassant." Finally, the author's unbelief, which prevented him from properly understanding the religious faith of the Canadian, is also responsible for his failure to note that the "curés colonisateurs" have most frequently been "our most distinguished priests and patriots."

Turning to a second aspect of the representative value of *Maria Chapdelaine*, we find that French Canadians have been apprehensive lest the novel be considered by outsiders to be a true picture of Quebec life in general. Hémon's use of the expression *pays de Québec* further accentuated the irritation of the nationalists who have attacked the novel on grounds which lie beyond the field of literary criticism. Hémon was not writing propaganda to promote immigration, nor was he preparing a prospectus on the material and cultural advantages of urban life in Quebec. French Canadians who most admire *Maria Chapdelaine* remind us almost unanimously, in one way or another, that the novel portrays but one part of French Canada.[18] Marcel Dugas in his *Littérature canadienne* refers to the limited vision which *Maria Chapdelaine* gives of Canada, and declares that *D'un Océan à l'Autre*, by Robert de Roquebrune, provides a picture of all Canada which is closer to the facts and to history.[19] It is evident here that the critic has shifted the attack from a defective picture of Quebec to a defective picture of Canada. Hémon, however, has referred to *Maria Chapdelaine* not as a picture but as a "récit du Canada français." Ferdinand Bélanger feels that if Louis Hémon had avoided occasional reference to the "province de Québec" his "*pays de Québec*" would have conveyed a poetic sense; it would have been the "pays du défricheur."[20]

M. Louis Dantin is one of the few critics who distinguish sharply between the legitimate concerns of literary criticism and those of a bureau for tourists. He describes Hémon as an "artist and not as an immigration-agent."[21] Of the enumeration of the resources of Canada, its water-power, its pulp-mills, etc., he asks: Do these things remotely touch "the aesthetic value of the work"? It was preoccupation with values of this nature that

[18]Séraphin Marion (*En Feuilletant nos écrivains*, "De Critique en critique," Montreal, 1931; Maurice Hébert; Edouard Monpetit, *Le Figaro*, January 30, 1935; Father Lamarche. The Abbé Lionel Groulx, on the other hand, had pointed out in *L'Action Française* (September 1922) that in view of the general ignorance in France about French Canada the cadre of *Maria Chapdelaine* is highly unimportant for many French readers.

[19]Paris, 1929, p. 159. M. Dugas is not much impressed by *Maria Chapdelaine;* he limits its author's title to glory by observing that for Louis Hémon to write *Maria Chapdelaine* was merely a question of composing an exotic novel (pp. 125-126). Albert Pelletier is of the opinion that Hémon in all good faith identified Péribonka with the "pays de Québec" because of his ignorance of the province of Quebec (*Égrappages*, Montreal, 1933, pp. 105-106).

[20]Louvigny de Montigny interprets "pays de Québec" as meaning those areas of colonization wherein by the very nature of their struggle the Canadians reveal those qualities which have been responsible for the "miracle canadien."

[21]*Gloses Critiques*, p. 72.

promoted in many critics the conflict between the instincts of chauvinism and the literary appreciation of *Maria Chapdelaine*.[22]

The tendency on the part of French critics to see in *Maria Chapdelaine* the soul of French Canada has been resented in Quebec because in many instances the comments were unqualified by any reference to the cities and the urban population. *La Liberté de Fribourg* for June 9, 1921, expressed the view that *Maria Chapdelaine* is the "evocation of the soul of a race at the same time as that of a country." Henry Bordeaux stated that "no Canadian author had painted his country with greater fidelity than Louis Hémon."[23] Charles Le Goffic made the claim that *Maria Chapdelaine* is a book which has "revealed a race to itself."[24] French reviews of the novel abounded in references of this kind to the Canadian soul. On the basis of what they could read in French newspapers French Canadians might be pardoned for not being entirely convinced by the late Mgr Camille Roy when he referes to the "voluntary aberration of those who wish to perceive in *Maria Chapdelaine* a picture not of the colonist settler but of the Canadian habitant in general, and who for that reason accuse the author of a generalization which is in their own minds."[25]

French-Canadian critics reject the notion that the soul of French Canada is to be found in *Maria Chapdelaine*. Jean Bruchesi, Séraphin Marion, and Maurice Hébert, for example, see in Hémon's novel a remarkable depiction of one aspect of the French-Canadian soul.[26] On this subject, as on so many others, scant courtesy has been extended to Hémon by certain writers.[27] Some French-Canadian critics, as Father Lamarche observes, limit the praise due to *Maria Chapdelaine* on the ground that the novel does not represent the "whole Canadian race" or even the entire class of "our peasants." M. Ulric Gauvin, in an article in *Le Semeur* of October, 1921, deals what he esteems a deadly blow to Hémon: it would be an error,

[22]*Action Catholique*, November 6, 1923; Ubald Paquin, *Le Nationaliste*, May 7, 1922; Roger Lebeau, *Le Matin*, April 29, 1922; Ernest Choquette, *La Presse*, June 7, 1924; Mgr Olivier Maurault, *Brièvetés*, p. 164.

[23]*La Revue de la Semaine*, July-August 1921.

[24]*La Démocratie nouvelle*, April 25, 1921.

[25]*Histoire de la Littérature canadienne*, Quebec, 1930, p. 225. Mgr Roy, if one is to believe the late Olivar Asselin, waited for a number of years before permitting himself the cautious words of praise he devotes to Louis Hémon's novel in his history of Canadian literature. See also *L'Ordre*, January 9, 11, 16, 1935.

[26]As early as 1917 Father de Grandpré pointed out that Hémon's novel depicted a special milieu and that, consequently, his observations on the French Canadian ought not to be applied to "the whole race." Louvigny de Montigny—ever the faithful defender of Louis Hémon—denies that the Frenchman has falsely expressed the "Canadian soul" for his purpose was not "to translate the general feeling, the soul of the province. . . ." Chapter viii of *La Revanche de Maria Chapdelaine* illustrates the circumspection required of the French-Canadian critic who wishes to discuss the meaning of "soul" when applied to *Maria Chapdelaine*. For a different approach to Louis Hémon and the French-Canadian soul see Albert Pelletier, *Égrappages*, pp. 105-6.

[27]*L'Evénement*, April 24, 1922.

he declares, to seek in *Maria Chapdelaine* "what the author has not put there and moreover could not put there in view of his inability to grasp it: the Canadian soul"; and he astonishes his reader by admitting that the novel is a "petit chef-d'oeuvre" while at the same time denying anything Canadian in the soul of the characters, in whom he sees "rather the sombre soul of the Russian peasant."

The final major issue of French-Canadian criticism of *Maria Chapdelaine* is concerned with the characters as colonists or clearers of the soil. It must be said that well-known Canadian critics have paid generous tribute to Hémon for his insight in perceiving those traits which are characteristic of the people of French Canada, of the past and of the present, in their struggle to clear the land and to maintain their traditions.[28] Louvigny de Montigny asserts that the types depicted by Louis Hémon are true to the degree that Chapdelaines, Marias, Edwige-Légarés, etc. are to be found everywhere in French-Canadian frontier districts.[29] Louis Dantin confirms this view by his general appreciation of *Maria Chapdelaine*. He states that Hémon's novel is the most Canadian of novels even though written by a "canadien de France."[30]

M. Pierre Georges Roy does not agree with Louvigny de Montigny. "Many people," he asserts, "are of the opinion that Hémon's characters are interesting, typical, but that they are rather exceptions in the great family of Canadian colonists." M. Roy does not explain how the characters can be at the same time both typical and exceptional. *Maria Chapdelaine*, he agrees, is a "petit chef-d'oeuvre." Nevertheless, in his view, the true novel of the French Canadian colonists is *Jean Rivard*.[31]

The allegation that Louis Hémon tinged his characters with fatalism has been a popular complaint. Father Lamarche, however, considers it ridiculous. He sees no shadow of fatalism in the resignation of the characters to hard work. It is altogether likely, as Louvigny de Montigny suggests, that this reproach stems from Father de Grandpré's article. Sir Wilfred Laurier, Arthur Letondel (quoted by Marcel Dugas), Henri d'Arles, Pierre Georges Roy, Mgr Maurault, all refer to this un-Canadian

[28]Ernest Bilodeau, *Le Nationaliste*, January 7, 1917; Father de Grandpré, *Le Parler français*, June-August 1917; D. Potvin, *Le Terroir*, July 1918; *Le Terroir*, October 1919. Jean Bruchesi, *L'Action Française*, December 1921. Maurice Hébert, *Le Canada Français*, October 1922. Father Lamarche, "Retour sur Maria Chapdelaine," *Ebauches Critiques*. See *L'Ordre*, May 3-9, 1935, for revision of the views on the models for the characters of Hémon's novel to be found in an earlier article by Potvin.

[29]*La Revanche de Maria Chapdelaine*, p. 59. Jean Bruchesi, *Rappels*, Montreal, 1941, p. 288.

[30]*Gloses Critiques*, p. 159.

[31]*Le Bulletin des Recherches Historiques*, October 1924. *Jean Rivard* by Antoine Gérin-Lajoie, published in 1862, is a thesis novel written to dissuade French Canadians from emigrating to the United States. Lajoie's centenary was celebrated in 1924. Cf. Louvigny de Montigny, *Antoine Gérin-Lajoie*, "Makers of Canadian Literature," Toronto, 1925, pp. 106-18. *La Revanche de Maria Chapdelaine*, pp. 97-100. Henri d'Arles doubted the validity of Hémon's characters as peasants. *La Presse*, January 28, 1924.

characteristic.[32] This fatalism or pessimism, so it is stated, has concealed the "cordial gaiety" characteristic of the French Canadian.

Louis Hémon's use of Canadianisms has not been exempt from criticism. Louvigny de Montigny suggests that it is this which has perhaps most antagonized a certain number of French Canadians.[33] They have resented such a description as appears in *Maria Chapdelaine* (p. 46): "a population dispersed in a vast, half-wild country, illiterate for the greater part. . . ." Resentment is to be seen in the irony of M. Ubald Paquin, who says that Louis Hémon "has understood the population of Quebec. He has understood that it speaks a patois and that it is not the people of Toronto who are ridiculous in saying that we do not speak the real French language, the 'Parisian French,' but indeed those who dare to affirm the contrary."[34] Needless to say M. de Montigny has not wavered in his defence of *Maria Chapdelaine.* In his preface to the Canadian edition of 1916 he spoke glowingly of Hémon's style. Father de Grandpré stressed the point that Hémon in his use of the "popular tongue" never descends to triviality. In more recent times MM. Marion and Dantin, and Mgr Roy have praised Hémon's admirable use of Canadianisms in his novel.

Maria Chapdelaine has influenced the course of the French Canadian novel. This fact is clear, no matter what diversity of opinion the book has aroused. M. Jules Léger writes in *Le Canada Français et son Expression Littéraire:*[35] "Louis Hémon did more for Canadian letters than all the theoreticians, and that because he wrote a work strongly inpregnated with local colour, Canadian to its very roots, but, at the same time, profoundly human. It is this characteristic which the literature of French expression lacked in Canada."

The fundamental weakness of French-Canadian criticism of *Maria Chapdelaine* lies in a national pride which is oversensitive and quick to see insult where none is intended. French criticism of the novel having touched the national ego to the quick, French-Canadian criticism has found little time to devote to the literary values of Hémon's book, dwelling upon it all too frequently as a text purported to misrepresent French Canada and the French Canadian. *Maria Chapdelaine* has been studied to unearth its so-called errors. It has been condemned as anti-Canadian propaganda. Occasionally it has been judged harshly as literature when the particular critic has paused for breath in arguments which are but remotely connected with

[32]Referring to the portrait of the Canadian peasant drawn by Hémon, Father de Grandpré had observed "the pessimism or rather the fatalism in it seems a bit exaggerated, and the soul of our people is perhaps less sombre than in *Maria Chapdelaine.*" See also *Le Canada*, June 30, 1921; *Littérature canadienne*, p. 116; *La Presse*, January 28, 1924; *Le Bulletin des Recherches Historiques*, October 1924; *Brièvetés*, p. 164.

[33]*La Revanche de Maria Chapdelaine*, p. 67.

[34]*Le Nationaliste*, May 7, 1922. See Archibald de Locheill, *L'Action Catholique*, June 12, 1922.

[35]Paris, 1938, pp. 152-3.

the novel. Very frequently, as we have said above, the "bad" criticism does not deal at all with *Maria Chapdelaine* as a novel. M. Ubald Paquin states, for example, that the many intrinsic weaknesses of the novel are trifles compared to the chief "fault," which is its intention.

The more significant French-Canadian critics have been cautious in their discussion of *Maria Chapdelaine;* few have dealt with the novel at any length. All seem to be burdened by their awareness of the bitterness aroused in Quebec by the French criticism. French-Canadian criticism has dwelt on the presentation of the religious faith of the Canadian, which it finds superficial. To many French Canadians the priest and the doctor appear distorted and offensive. They are unanimous in asserting that the depiction of the "âme canadienne" is not to be found in *Maria Chapdelaine*, and that Hémon has been careless in his use of the term "pays de Québec."

One does not mean to deny that the study of *Maria Chapdelaine* can ignore the question of the truth of the life depicted. No novel can hope to portray the complete life of a people. It may, however, seize upon certain significant aspects of that life, which permit us to feel that we have hit upon general truth. In the case of French Canada, for historical reasons and because for so long the population of Quebec was more rural than urban (as it was at the time Hémon composed his novel), *Maria Chapdelaine* comes closer than any novel of its kind to total truth. The truth which is important in Hémon's book is broad human truth, not mere photographic exactitude; for, *Maria Chapdelaine* being literature, the reality it depicts has been translated by the artist's personality.

French-Canadian criticism has too often neglected the fact that Louis Hémon was a novelist, and moved by the practical and the artistic considerations of the novelist. It has frequently failed to recognize the not unrelated fact that *Maria Chapdelaine* is a masterpiece which has aroused widespread interest in, and sympathy for, the French Canadian. Criticism of *Maria Chapdelaine* has been colonial in spirit; for it obviously fears condescension on the part of the foreigner, especially of the Frenchman. The reader of such criticism remains unsatisfied with the sketchy treatment of the novel, and finds insufficient recognition of its importance in French-Canadian letters.

The obvious answer to many of the objections offered by French-Canadian critics is that Hémon wrote his book—not theirs. He was no propagandist. It is fortunate for French Canada, and the world at large, that *Maria Chapdelaine*, instead of being a "roman à thèse," is quite simply a work of literature.

JOHNSON AND THE ART OF ANECDOTE[1]

C. R. Tracy

FROM our point of view, Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is a characteristic literary product of its age, for it preserves many of the strongest traditions of the century: its love of personalities, its scholarly temper, its cultivation of correspondence, its appreciation of the quieter moods and moments of life, and its fondness for conversation. Viewed from the other side, however, the *Johnson* stands out in marked contrast to the ideals of neo-classicism and in particular to the aesthetic doctrine of the general idea to which Johnson himself had often given memorable expression. "The business of a poet," said Imlac, in *Rasselas*, "is to examine, not the individual, but the species; to remark general properties and large appearances . . . ."[2] Johnson, moreover, praised Shakespeare because "his persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated . . . ."[3] Reynolds, too, in discussing painting, remarked that the portrait-painter *may* be compelled to stoop to a more or less servile realism, but that if he "is desirous to raise and improve his subject, he has no other means than by approaching it to a general idea."[4] So, although the first aesthetic principle of neo-classicism may be the imitation of nature, it stood out against all kinds of realism and naturalism in its preference for large general concepts. Boswell, on the contrary, departing radically from these precedents, set out to give the world, not a portrait of Johnson in the grand manner of Reynolds, but rather a vast accumulation of detailed fact and anecdote. His reader is not told in a few highly condensed, well-pondered sentences what the essence of Johnson's soul was, but he is asked to follow his life through many pages, to listen to his talk, to observe him repeatedly under different circumstances, to draw inferences and make deductions, and to verify and revise every conclusion in the light of later observations. In Boswell's

[1]This paper was read (by proxy) at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association of America in New York City in December, 1944. The source materials are mainly found in G. B. Hill's editions of Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* (3 vols., Oxford, 1905) and of Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (revised by L. F. Powell, 6 vols., Oxford, 1934), which are referred to as *Lives* and *Boswell* respectively. J. E. Brown conveniently gathered most of them together in his *Critical Opinions of Samuel Johnson* (Princeton, 1926), and B. Evans studied them systematically in his article, "Dr. Johnson's Theory of Biography" (*Review of English Studies*, X, 1934, 301-10). Donald Stauffer has made an admirable study of the whole subject in his book *The Art of Biography in Eighteenth Century England* (Princeton, 1941). This paper was completed and read before I had seen a copy of J. W. Krutch's *Samuel Johnson* (New York, 1944); with his opinions on Johnson as a biographer I am in general agreement, though my approach to the subject has been different.

[2]Samuel Johnson, *The History of Rasselas* (ed. R. W. Chapman, Oxford, 1927), 50.

[3]*Johnson on Shakespeare* (ed. Walter Raleigh, Oxford, 1925), 12.

[4]Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses* (World's Classics), 51-2.

references to his method and achievements in his introduction and letters he valued himself most on the quantity of reliable information he presented, rather than on the finality of his interpretation, and the wish he expressed at the beginning of his book was that if Johnson's other friends had been "as diligent and ardent as I was, he might have been almost entirely preserved."[5] He might have added, like St. John the Apostle, that "even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written," for Boswell's aim was not the imaginative creation of "just representations of general nature," but the voluminous recording of evidence.

With unconscious inconsistency, Johnson himself was the most philosophic exponent of the theory of the general idea, and at the same time Boswell's chief source of suggestion and encouragement. Whenever he turned his critical attention to biography specifically, Johnson seemed to be in complete agreement with Boswell's later practice. He urged Boswell to include as many anecdotes as possible in his *Account of Corsica*,[6] and by an anecdote, he made clear in the fourth edition of the *Dictionary*, he meant "a minute passage of private life." At another time he remarked: "All knowledge is of itself of some value. There is nothing so minute or inconsiderable, that I would not rather know it than not."[7] The famous Number 60 of *The Rambler* concludes with the statement that "the incidents which give excellence to biography are of a volatile and evanescent kind," and elsewhere he remarked that what he valued in biography was "the delicate features of the mind, the nice discriminations of character, and the minute peculiarities of conduct."[8] Though he thought Tickell's mention of the irregularity of Addison's pulse of no advantage to posterity, he himself considered Catiline's limp an important biographical fact,[9] and, as Professor Stauffer points out, faithfully recorded in his own autobiography a boil on his buttock which "swelled, broke, and healed."[10] These small biographical facts are of value, according to Johnson, because they enable the reader to see the subject as intimately as one who has "eat and drunk and lived in social intercourse with him,"[11] the only point of view from which a good biography may be written.

That, in spite of all he had written about the general idea, Johnson should have attached such importance to the streaks on the biographical tulip is at least curious. Did he apply to biography quite different aesthetic standards from those he applied to other forms of literature? The answer seems to be that he did, making a sharp distinction in his mind between great imaginative literature, like poetry and drama, and types like biography and history which are tied down to the recording and recreating of specific sets of facts. For in the former the imagination is free from the necessity of pursuing the narrow road of fact and has open to it "boundless

[5] *Boswell*, I, 30.
[6] *Boswell*, II, 11.
[7] *Boswell*, II, 357.
[8] *Lives*, II, 116.
[9] *Rambler*, No. 60.
[10] *Art of Biography*, 395.
[11] *Boswell*, II, 166.

regions of possibility."[12] Johnson's distrust of the imagination is so familiar an idea to everyone who has read the chapter in *Rasselas* on "the dangerous prevalence of imagination" that exaggerated emphasis is often given to it. Readers forget that Johnson's *Preface to Shakespeare*—to cite the best, but not the only example—is nothing more or less than a vindication of the power of the poetic imagination, not merely to entertain an audience, but also to present profound truths. Actually, whenever Johnson found fault with the imagination, he was thinking of works like Pope's *Unfortunate Lady* in which there is a romantic abandonment to mere sentiment; but he spoke warmly in praise of the same poet's *Eloisa to Abelard* in which emotion is controlled and developed with high imaginative power in conformity with psychological truth. The fact is, Johnson did not distrust the imagination, but rather believed that the greatest art must be imaginative, for only in the world of the imagination has the creative artist the freedom necessary for conceiving general ideas. Generalizations are creative whereas anecdotes are servile. He feared merely that freedom might be abused.[13]

In sharp distinction to great imaginative art, in Johnson's mind, stood history, in which the imagination is cramped by fact. "The happy historian," he wrote in Number 122 of *The Rambler*, "has no other labour than of gathering what tradition pours down before him, or records treasure for his use . . . he is not to form, but copy characters . . . his materials are provided and put into his hands, and he is at leisure to employ all his powers in arranging and displaying them." It would be easy to collect more remarks made by Johnson in disparagement of history than of the imagination. "Great abilities (said he) are not requisite for an Historian; for in historical composition, all the greatest powers of the human mind are quiescent. He has facts ready to his hand; so there is no exercise of invention. Imagination is not required in any high degree; only about as much as is used in the lower kinds of poetry."[14] On another occasion he said: " 'There is but a shallow stream of thought in history.' BOSWELL: 'But surely Sir, an historian has reflection.' JOHNSON: 'Why yes, Sir; and so has a cat when she catches a mouse for her kitten.' "[15]

It must be obvious that most of what Johnson said about history applies also to biography, for it is equally bound down to fact, and so Johnson's conviction that "no species of writing seems more worthy of cultivation than biography"[16] may appear inconsistent. He set a high value upon

[12] *Rambler*, No. 121.

[13] Krutch (*Samuel Johnson*, 321-32) rightly points out that in Johnson's aesthetics the imagination has "nothing to do with . . . any transcendental meaning" attached to it later by romantic critics, and that his theory of the imagination comes close to that of Hobbes. When Johnson is not theorizing, however, but dealing with individual products of the imagination, he seems to me to allow to the imagination far more dignity and scope than Hobbes did. See also Raymond Havens's article, "Johnson's Distrust of the Imagination" (*Journal of English Literary History*, X, 1943, 243-55).

[14] *Boswell*, I, 424-5. [15] *Boswell*, II, 195. [16] *Rambler*, No. 60.

biography, however, fully conscious of its limitations; but he valued it more highly than history because it moved within a narrower compass and came closer home to men's business and bosoms. He was rude to people who talked to him about the Punic wars because Roman history was remote and unrelated to contemporary life, but no aspect of individual life and character could ever be uninteresting to this great humanist. Biography might not be for him one of the great forms of creative art, but it did possess a value impossible to history by getting at the truths that mattered. It got at them, however, from the opposite end to poetry, by putting in place of the grand conceptions of the poet an intimate view of our common humanity.

Johnson's increasing preference for biography was due partly to his consuming interest in human nature, but also partly to a growing scepticism about the aesthetic principles underlying classicism and neo-classicism. Though he never openly wavered in his admiration for the great classics, there is some reason to believe that he came eventually to think that the classical manner was no longer well fitted to the times in which he lived. "I fancy mankind may come, in time," he once said, "to write all aphoristically, except in narrative; grow weary of preparation, and connection, and illustration, and all those arts by which a big book is made."[17] I cannot believe that he really thought the jottings, anecdotes and ana which had become his favourite reading were an artistic improvement over Homer and Shakespeare, but merely that he was giving voice to a variation on the familiar contemporary doctrine of the decline of literature. He was apparently becoming increasingly sceptical of the powers of the human mind, and particularly of the magnificently self-confident intuitions by means of which great imaginative artists create their truths. He was not finding fault with Shakespeare, but saying that we shall not see his like again. The modern man, he felt, like Milton's Satan, has lost most of the archangel from within him, and must henceforth be content to replace the classical poets' grand vision and imaginative grasp of truth with an industrious concern for small, concrete, verifiable facts, such as those which occur in biography.[18]

Turning from Johnson the theorist to Johnson the biographer one finds a similar conflict of principles. He introduces anecdotes, but one is not very favourably impressed by his use of them. It is true that he tells us of Cowley's discovering Spenser in the window of his mother's apartment—one of his most charming anecdotes[19]—of Gay's clumsily oversetting a

[17] Boswell, *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides* (ed. R. W. Chapman, Oxford, 1930), 184.

[18] A development somewhat similar to Johnson's occurred in Pope, who began his poetical career by either producing or wishing to produce works in all of the recognized classical kinds of great poetry, but who eventually devoted himself almost entirely to writing satires marked by anecdotes, minute particulars, and a generally more realistic style. Swift's turning away from the classical ode, which he wrote so badly, to burlesque is a running parody of Pope's poetical evolution.

[19] *Lives*, I, 2 and Note 6.

screen in the royal palace when summoned there to read one of his plays,[20] of Swift's running up and down a hill every two hours and washing himself "with oriental scrupulosity,"[21] and of Thomson's nervously reciting the lines out loud in the theatre during the first performance of one of his own plays.[22] But in spite of these flashes, I disagree with Professor Stauffer's remark that he was "a master . . . at drawing the general truth from the individual fact,"[23] for too often his anecdotes seem to have been dragged in more our of respect to the paper value of minute facts than with any understanding of their biographical possibilities. Of Pope's friend Cromwell, for instance, he could learn nothing "but that he used to ride a-hunting in a tye-wig."[24] This fact is left to speak for itself whatever its message may be, for Johnson cannot use it in creating a picture of the man. This is true of altogether too many of his anecdotes. His materials, however, were scanty and he was scrupulous not to allow any fact to stand unless he was sure of it. He often complained about biographers who invent parts of their evidence: "But thus it is that characters are written," he wrote about Fenton's character of Roscommon: "we know somewhat and we imagine the rest."[25]

If a defence of Johnson should be made on the ground that his materials were inadequate, that he had neither time nor opportunity to fill up the gaps in his documentary evidence, and that he was too conscientious a scholar to invent anecdotes or to build too much upon what he did have, one may turn to his lives of men he had known personally. Of these the best by far is the life of Savage, published in 1744 shortly after Savage's death and included later among the *Lives of the Poets*. Johnson's acquaintance with Savage was, of course, fairly brief, beginning not later than April, 1738 and concluding with Savage's departure from London in July of the following year; but while it lasted the two men shared each other's lives quite fully. If Johnson ever knew a man, he knew Savage. He does give us an unforgettable account of the life of the poor poet:

> He lodged as much by accident as he dined, and passed the night sometimes in mean houses, which are set open at night to any casual wanderers, sometimes in cellars, among the riot and filth of the meanest and most profligate of the rabble; and sometimes, when he had not money to support even the expences of these receptacles, walked about the streets till he was weary, and lay down in the summer upon a bulk, or in the winter, with his associates in poverty, among the ashes of a glass-house.[26]

This is good; but if one is looking for realism, he could find much better in Defoe. Or look at his picture of Savage's appearance: "He was of a middle stature, of a thin habit of body, a long visage, coarse features, and melancholy aspect; of a grave and manly deportment, a solemn dignity of mien, but which, upon a nearer acquaintance, softened into an engaging easiness of manners. His walk was slow, and his voice tremulous and mournful. He was easily excited to smiles, but very seldom provoked to

[20] *Lives*, II, 274. [21] *Lives*, III, 5 and 55. [22] *Lives*, III, 291.
[23] *Art of Biography*, 401. [24] *Lives*, III, 92. [25] *Lives*, I, 235. [26] *Lives*, II, 398-9.

laughter."[27] This is even better, but it is at best a posed portrait not a candid view of the man in action.

It is remarkable how well satisfied Johnson is with general statements. He must have heard much of Savage's talk, for he refers several times in the *Life* to his brilliant conversation. In fact, the only satisfactory explanation of Savage's success in convincing people that he was the son of the late Earl Rivers and a poet at least potentially great, is that he must have been a man of unusually entertaining conversation. Yet nobody has recorded any of it, beyond a couple of heavily antithetical *mots* preserved by Johnson. Were people in the eighteenth century willing to feed and clothe Savage, to stay up all night with him to the utter disruption of their domestic arrangements, merely to hear him say that the "whole range" of Walpole's mind was "from obscenity to politicks, and from politicks to obscenity"?[28] Echoes of Savage's conversation must have been still ringing in Johnson's ears, but since he could not recapture the exact words, he was reluctant to risk direct discourse as Boswell did. Passages of the *Life*, indeed, must have been based upon recollections of actual conversations; as for example the following ironical paragraph representing a conversation with Johnson on the subject of country life:

> With these expectations he was so enchanted, that when he was once gently reproached by a friend for submitting to live upon a subscription, and advised rather by a resolute exertion of his abilities to support himself, he could not bear to debar himself from the happiness which was to be found in the calm of a cottage, or lose the opportunity of listening without intermission to the melody of the nightingale, which he believed was to be heard from every bramble, and which he did not fail to mention as a very important part of the happiness of a country life.[29]

But how much of the vividness must have been lost in the indirect discourse!

So far the most conspicuous of Johnson's qualities as a biographer has been his highly spiced scholarly conscience, which seemed often to frustrate the exercise of his interpretative imagination. But happily this is not all there is to say about Johnson's biographical art. For unexpectedly Johnson seems to be at his best when he has no particular facts at all to go upon, when he pushes his notes aside and allows himself to generalize out of the wealth of his experience and understanding. He may sometimes be wrong in his estimates of personality, but too much has been said about his prejudices and too little about his usually shrewd and sympathetic understanding. Professor Sherburn, for example, has warmly defended his interpretation of Pope's character, and other modern authorities have testified to their high regard for his judgment of other men.

The *Life of Savage*, again, is an instance of Johnson's real psychological penetration. Modern scholars agree pretty well that Savage was an impostor as well as a bad poet, and that he tried to make his way in the world by alternate flattery and blackmail. We may wonder, then, at Johnson's warm defence of the character of such a man, and accuse him of either white-

[27] *Lives*, II, 429. [28] *Lives*, II, 372. [29] *Lives*, II, 410.

washing or mere obtuseness. But after considerable study of Savage's career and character from all the available evidence I keep coming back to Johnson for a fairer and clearer view of the man than I can get elsewhere. Johnson, of course, did not know all the facts; he probably did not know of Savage's complicity in propaganda work for the Jacobite rising of 1715, so that Savage's later adulation of the Hanoverians was not so glaringly inconsistent to Johnson as it is to us. But, for all his willingness to see Savage in a favourable light, Johnson has kept his head better than Savage's only subsequent biographer, S. V. Makower, who constantly yielded to the temptation of exploiting all the many possibilities in his life for sensational and sentimental romancing.[30] Two novelists have also tried their hands at interpreting Savage: Charles Whitehead made him into a pure-minded Dickensian hero, and Gwyn Jones into an ignorant dupe.[31] But has Johnson not outdone them all and put his finger infallibly upon the clue to Savage's character? Johnson emphasizes no single characteristic in the man more strongly than his capacity for deceiving himself. The following passage may be described as the key to Johnson's interpretation:

> Savage was always able to live at peace with himself . . . . It were doubtless to be wished that truth and reason were universally prevalent; . . . but if adventitious and foreign pleasures must be pursued it would be perhaps of some benefit, since that pursuit must frequently be fruitless, if the practice of Savage could be taught that folly might be an antidote to folly, and one fallacy be obviated by another. But the danger of this pleasing intoxication must not be concealed; nor indeed can any one, after having observed the life of Savage, need to be cautioned against it. By imputing none of his miseries to himself he continued to act upon the same principles, and to follow the same path; was never made wiser by his sufferings, nor preserved by one misfortune from falling into another. He proceeded throughout his life to tread the same steps on the same circle; always applauding his past conduct, or at least forgetting it, to amuse himself with phantoms of happiness which were dancing before him, and willingly turned his eyes from the light of reason, when it would have discovered the illusion and shewn him, what he never wished to see, his real state. He is even accused, after having lulled his imagination with those ideal opiates, of having tried the same experiment upon his conscience; and, having accustomed himself to impute all deviations from the right to foreign causes, it is certain that he was upon every occasion too easily reconciled to himself, and that he appeared very little to regret those practices which had impaired his reputation. The reigning error of his life was, that he mistook the love for the practice of virtue, and was indeed not so much a good man as the friend of goodness.[32]

Johnson's portrait of Savage, one of the crucial passages of which I have just quoted, is an extended study of one of its author's favourite themes, "the dangerous prevalence of imagination," for he saw in Savage the embodiment of day-dreaming, self-dramatization, self-pity, and all the bad qualities of mind and heart he so neatly summed up in his word *cant*. It is clear that, for all his theoretical emphasis on minute facts and the

[30] *Richard Savage, A Mystery in Biography* (London, 1909).

[31] Charles Whitehead, *Richard Savage, a Romance of Real Life* (London, 1842 and 1896); Gwyn Jones, *Richard Savage* (London, 1935).

[32] *Lives*, II, 379-80.

evanescent aspects of personality, Johnson made no more than a feeble effort himself in his various biographies to perceive the man entire and in action in the Boswellian manner. He had a scrupulous regard for telling the truth and contributed some important scholarship, but his biographical anecdotes are too few to shed more than a stray flash of colour here and there and all too often they are left to glimmer ineffectually in a biographical gloom. Johnson's personalities, moreover, do not develop as Johnson's own does in Boswell's life through action. But, on the other hand, Johnson is brilliant at penetrating a personality and discovering its essential qualities and at recreating it again. He has, in short, more of the powers of the great classical artist than he was himself aware of, and produced "just representations of general nature" rather than the less creative truths of history and anecdotal biography.

Consequently, Johnson's work as a biographer catches the art of biography hesitating for the first time at the fork of the roads leading separately to science and art, a fork which, according to Harold Nicolson and Virginia Woolf,[33] it is still unable to pass. Johnson himself betrays within his own mind both these bifurcating tendencies, developing out of opposing principles in his aesthetic philosophy. This was only one of the many curious complexities underlying the placid surface of the eighteenth century, resulting from the overlapping of the old humanistic tradition surviving from the renaissance and the newer scientific and historical spirit which was to prevail in the following century.

[33]Harold Nicolson, *The Development of English Biography* (London, 1927); Virginia Woolf, "The Art of Biography" (*The Death of the Moth*, London, 1942).

REVIEWS

SOVIET POWER AND POLICY*

FRANK H. UNDERHILL

In his book on the *Anatomy of Revolution* Professor Crane Brinton remarked that while passions still run high over the French Revolution they are being cooled slowly by the increasing flood of printer's ink. Considering what has taken place in France during the last few years, this remark seems to have been premature. And so far, printer's ink only serves to feed the flames kindled by the Russian Revolution. We are unable to reach any agreed truth about the U.S.S.R. because our own sympathies are too deeply involved in the issues with which judgment is concerned. A great deal of writing about it after twenty-five years is still in the stage of Burke and Tom Paine. The veil of secrecy with which the Soviet Union surrounds itself and, as we have recently been discovering, all other countries which come within its sphere of influence, also makes competent judgment very difficult. The assiduous dishonesty of most of its professional propagandists in Western countries, the members of the various national communist parties and their fellow travellers, is so exasperating that most of us are turned against it. On the other hand we have just been fighting a great war in alliance with the U.S.S.R., and if we are not to drift into another one against it we have to find some way of living beside it on terms of tolerable amity.

The root question is as to the direction in which Soviet communism has been moving under Stalin and is likely to move. Has the revolution entered its Thermidorean phase? Do the signs of revival of Russian nationalism and religion mean that peace with the bourgeois world is possible and that Stalin will be content with "Socialism in one country"? The Trotskyites, who measure all things by a Platonic Idea of Revolution laid up in Trotsky's head, have long been denouncing the Stalinist régime as a betrayal of everything that Lenin intended. Liberal socialists and socialistic liberals either tend to agree with them that present-day Russia is a ruthless bureaucratic dictatorship, inherently as dangerous to our Western democracies as the totalitarian régimes of Germany and Japan; or else they think that, given time and security from external enemies, the Soviet system may evolve in the direction of democratic freedom for the individual. To the right of them are conservatives of various hues, divided between those who, dreaming of markets, see communism slowly returning to respectable capitalist ways, and those who see it only as the destroyer of private property and therefore the enemy to be fought to the death.

**Russia and Postwar Europe.* By DAVID J. DALLIN. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. 1944. Pp. xi, 230. ($3.50)

The Real Soviet Russia. By DAVID J. DALLIN. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press. 1944. Pp. x, 260. ($4.50)

The Pattern of Soviet Power. By EDGAR SNOW. New York: Random House. 1945. Pp. xiii, 219. ($3.50)

The books with which this article deals are by two writers who represent distinctly opposed schools of thought. Edgar Snow is well known for his sympathetic accounts of the Chinese communists; though he works for the *Saturday Evening Post*, he is one of those journalists who is in favour with the Soviet authorities and is given as much freedom to see what goes on in Russia as any outsider is allowed. His powers of penetrating observation have been well proved in the past and his honesty is above question, but his general bias is clearly on the side of the Soviets. David Dallin was an opposition member of the Moscow Soviet from 1917 to 1921; he had been an exile from Russia before that, and he has been an exile again ever since. His books are based on thorough study of all the Soviet publications that are available outside Russia; the two listed here are masterly studies, much more thorough than that of Snow; in fact the second volume, *The Real Soviet Russia*, better deserves the title of *The Pattern of Soviet Power* than does Snow's volume. But while his publishers speak of his "clinical detachment" free from "the demagoguery of Right or Left," his bias against the present régime is as clear as Snow's bias in favour of it.

The first Dallin book, *Russia and Postwar Europe*, is a brilliant analysis of Soviet foreign policy, primarily in relation to Britain and Germany, in the years since 1917. The second is devoted to the social and political structure of the U.S.S.R. itself. Both volumes deal at length with the relation between the "constant" of communist ideology and organization and such "variables" as the new nationalism and the diplomatic manoeuvres of power politics. *The Real Soviet Russia* has a long and valuable account of the class structure—the new governing class of official employees, the industrial workers, the peasants, and at the bottom the ten million or more of forced labourers. The analysis of the composition of these classes and of the relation of the communist party to each of them, is brilliant; and to this reviewer (whose knowledge of the subject must be confessed to be very amateurish) it seems to tell more about the realities of Soviet politics than anything that he has read before. Dallin's writing shows the strength and the weakness of the student of documents. It is systematic and comprehensive; but it tends, because of his concentration upon the task of showing how Soviet power politics works, to make the reader forget that the real Soviet Russia, after all, must be composed of men, women and children, and not of categories, classes and ideologies. Snow has the great strength of the journalist, as distinguished from the academic student, that he wanders about the world always seeing people, just people. He has made his reputation because he is much more than the mere journalist collecting personal gossip. But his stories and his concrete pictures of things he has seen correct the rather sinister impression that Dallin's impersonal analysis leaves.

The remarkable thing is that the two authors agree in their findings on most of the important questions. They both reject the optimistic wishful thinking, so popular of late, that Stalin's Russia is giving up communism.

Dallin emphasizes over and over again that the Soviet system is still based on the two fundamentals: state ownership and control of the whole economy, and the totalitarian domination of the communist party over all aspects of life. Both agree that the recent manifestations of Russian nationalism do not change these fundamentals. Snow thinks that recent appeals to Russian history, the revival of heroes like Suvorov and Kutuzov, and other such phenomena, merely demonstrate the confidence of the régime which has conquered all its internal enemies and can now see itself safely as an integral part of Russian evolution. And both writers point out that, while we outsiders hear most about the revived nationalism, the teaching and propaganda of communism inside Russia goes on with renewed intensity now that victory approaches. The Russian citizen of the next generation will look back to the great victories as the fruit of communist leadership.

Both men also have essentially the same thing to say about the supposed religious revival. They point out that under the new constitution religion is allowed freedom of worship but not freedom of propaganda, that everything the Church does can be done only with the help of equipment which it gets from the communist government, that it pays a price for its increased freedom in being required to preach loyalty of the most fervent kind, that support of the Orthodox Church is politically very valuable to Stalin in his dealings with Orthodox believers in the countries of eastern Europe and in his dealings with the Vatican. Both authors lead the reader inevitably to Gibbon's cynical conclusion that to the magistrate all religions are equally useful.

The two also give much the same analysis of Soviet policy towards the acquisition of a "security zone" in eastern Europe, an analysis which has been confirmed by events since the books were written. The Soviet will require that Europe east of a line from Stettin to Trieste be under governments friendly to herself; and the chief proof of that friendship will be that these governments carry out a social revolution sufficient to remove upper-class landowning, commercial, and military elements who formed the nucleus of anti-Soviet forces before 1939. The difference between the two is that Snow seems to imply that Moscow will be content with this partial revolution and will not insist on complete sovietization of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Jugoslavia, etc. Dallin's whole analysis leads to the conclusion that this is superficial. The Soviet authorities will make use of "democracy" to give an opportunity for communist parties to establish themselves in each country, and then the final revolution will be carried out under native auspices. The Soviet has learnt by sad experience since 1917 that revolutions do not seem to break out spontaneously to the west of the U.S.S.R.; so its present recipe is a large dose of Soviet armies combined with a small dose of native communism. The proportions in which the doses are mixed will vary from country to country.

Snow's general attitude is that the Western world should acquiesce in this Russian policy of security zones. (He predicts a similar security zone

in the Far East.) Dallin is convinced that it shows an inherent expansionism in Soviet communism and is dangerous. He points out that in Europe it destroys all basis for the old British policy of a balance of power, that it brings Russia into the Mediterranean, and that communist ideology has always placed Britain in the position of number one capitalist enemy. A later book of his, not yet available in Canada, *The Big Three*, is mainly devoted to discussion of situations in which the Soviet and the Anglo-American forces are likely to clash. He does not think that the communist leaders have at all abandoned their fundamental Marxian analysis of our modern world—a world in which revolutions lead to wars, and wars lead to revolutions, until capitalism is finally liquidated.

Dallin believes that Soviet foreign policy has been grievously mistaken in the past, and that it is about to make similar mistakes in the near future. It would have been much cheaper for Russia if she had made an alliance with the Western powers against Germany before the French army was destroyed and Hitler controlled the whole continent. The price she is paying for Stalin's leadership is the devastation of her best territories and the loss of millions of her people. Her security in the future also would be better attained by an alliance with the West rather than by this attempt to dominate eastern Europe. For her present policy, he thinks, will lead to clashes with the nationalism of these countries which she is absorbing into her security zone and will weaken rather than strengthen her.

Finally both men agree in emphasizing the tremendous costs which this war has imposed upon the U.S.S.R. Snow gives a vivid picture of what the German invasion meant to the Ukraine, the richest part of Russia. Dallin points out how Russian war losses in population make unreal all the flamboyant calculations of future populations in Soviet territories. Both agree that recovery will be slow and painful.

Snow's book will no doubt find a wider popular audience, but Dallin seems to me to provide a more searching analysis. Snow is mainly concerned with the Soviet power as it presents itself to the outside world. Some of the most interesting pages of Dallin deal with trends inside Soviet society, which (he thinks) make at least for tension, and perhaps for profound upheavals, in the future. He finds in the new upper class of ten million or more government employees a possible nucleus for future discontents among the people as a whole. "The peculiar role of the Russian intelligentsia as the focus of the political needs of all classes of the population is by no means new in Russia." And this new intelligentsia, he says,

> are tired of heroism, of stress and strain, of sacrifice and suffering, of persecution and war and death. They want to come home from work, relax and play with their children. . . . The ending of the revolution after a quarter of century of great experiments, transformations and achievements . . . would not involve a return to the past. Hardly anyone dreams of the restoration of old Russia. But the revolution must be ended.

In the army also he finds a possible instrument of opposition to the communist leadership. There has been a constant struggle behind the scenes

between the army command and the party, and the army leaders resent party interference. "Every political system has its own logic"; and most of Dallin's two volumes is taken up with showing how inexorably the communist logic has worked in practice. "This horrible poverty, these unheard-of privations inflicted upon the population do not in themselves constitute a guaranty of necessary internal reforms." Nevertheless, he concludes, "the course of the war, the price of victory, and the post-war situation in Russia constitute the prologue to great internal changes, greater changes than some are inclined to think." Who can tell whether at this point Mr. Dallin was passing over from "clinical detachment" to wishful thinking?

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY RADICALS[1]

A. S. P. Woodhouse

The Levellers, the one group of genuine political democrats thrown up by the Puritan Revolution, have received in recent years a great deal of attention. The pioneer work of Professor C. T. Pease, *The Leveller Movement*, is still indispensable; Professor Haller in his *Tracts on Liberty* and *The Rise of Puritanism*, and Mr. D. W. Petegorsky's too little known *Left-Wing Democracy in the English Civil War*, have made notable contributions to the subject, while Dr. Arthur Barker's *Milton and the Puritan Dilemma* traces the later phase of the movement in relation to Milton, Harrington and others. Not least interesting is the part of the Levellers in the Putney and Whitehall Debates in the Councils of the Army during 1647-9, and in the events leading up to them, for which our principal sources are in the Clarke MSS., edited half a century ago by the late Sir Charles Firth, and in the vast pamphlet literature of the period. Excerpts from a number of these pamphlets were printed in the present reviewer's edition of the Debates, and it is the purpose of the new volumes by Professor Haller and Mr. Davies, and by Mr. Don M. Wolfe, to place before the reader the complete text of a few of these same pamphlets and to add yet others from both the military and civil agitations of the Levellers. The result is that a very large body of both primary and secondary material bearing on the Levellers is now in the hands of the student.

It would be hard to imagine a work more adequate in all respects than is *The Leveller Tracts*, edited by Professor William Haller of Columbia University and Mr. Godfrey Davies of the Huntington Library, the editor

[1] *The Leveller Tracts 1647-1653.* Edited by William Haller and Godfrey Davies. New York: Columbia University Press in co-operation with Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery [San Marino, Calif.]. 1944. Pp. viii, 481. ($6.50)

Leveller Manifestoes of the Puritan Revolution. Edited by Don M. Wolfe. Foreword by Charles A. Beard. New York: Nelson. 1944. Pp. xiv, 440. ($5.00)

The Classical Republicans: An Essay in the Recovery of a Pattern of Thought in Seventeenth Century England. By Zera S. Fink. (Northwestern University Studies in the Humanities, no. 9.) Evanston. [Ill.], Northwestern University Press. 1945. Pp. xi, 225. ($4.00)

of Firth's posthumously published writings and author of the *Oxford History of England 1603-1660*. The original scheme was Mr. Haller's and builds upon his *Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution*. The admirable introduction was written by Mr. Haller and the equally admirable introductory notes to the documents by Mr. Davies, whose knowledge of the history and bibliography of controversy is unrivalled and whose private library supplied several of the texts. The volume prints twelve pamphlets hitherto inaccessible to the ordinary student, the full text of three others accessible only in part, and additional excerpts from a fourth. Together these afford documentation for a history of the Leveller movement from its rise to importance in 1647 to its decline by 1653, with Lilburne, and to a less degree Walwyn, in the central roles. To this history some two thirds of the introduction is devoted, whose staple is compressed and lucid narrative interspersed with analyses of the principal actors, their characters, motives, and ideas. Prefixed to this section is a useful account of the state of the subject, whose only serious omission is the work of Mr. Petegorsky. Mr. Haller criticizes the "comparatively little attention . . . given to the intimate relation of Leveller political ideas to the religious background from which they sprang and by which they continued to be deeply coloured," and asserts the importance of Christian liberty and other dogmatic concepts as supplying a formative norm. To this subject of religious ideology and its coalescence with secular, as illustrated chiefly in Lilburne, the rest of the introduction is dedicated. Particularly illuminating are the account of the effect which Puritan preaching had on laymen of liberal tendencies, and the account of Lilburne's reading in such law books as St. Germain's *Doctor and Student* and Coke's *Institutes*, Part II, on Magna Charta, though I still think that some essential ideas are omitted in Mr. Haller's analysis, so that he makes the conjunction of "grace" and "nature" too exclusively a matter of "confusion . . . in the popular mind," and that reference to Milton on the one hand and Roger Williams on the other would supply these ideas.

Mr. Wolfe's *Leveller Manifestoes* must suffer in any comparison with the volume just reviewed, and such comparison is of course inevitable. It has had the good fortune to print the same pamphlet in only three cases, but of the remaining seventeen documents seven were already available in Gardiner's *Constitutional Documents*, Haller's *Tracts on Liberty* or (in copious extracts) in the present reviewer's *Puritanism and Liberty*. These anticipations, save for a belated footnote reference to Haller, Mr. Wolfe ignores. One can only infer that he is culpably ignorant of the modern literature of his subject or that, cheered on by Dr. Charles A. Beard in the Foreword, he has chosen to assume the role of a pioneer, that will deceive no one: which of the two is the correct inference I cannot pretend to decide.[2] But

[2]He explains the genesis of his book in a desire to provide students with texts of "the *Agreements* of 1647, 1648, and 1649" (two of which they already had in Gardiner). That the footnote reference to Haller was an afterthought seems to be indicated by his absence

in any case Mr. Wolfe is sure of the dutiful plaudits of the Left as the Foreword (not to mention the remarks on his pedestrian study of Milton, culled from the *Nation*, the *New Republic* and the ever-helpful Dr. Beard, and printed on the jacket of the present work) amply testifies. The introduction is a rather diffuse and heavy-handed narrative of the Levellers' activities, with a summary (one can hardly call it an analysis) of their ideas, from a semi-Marxist, which is of course an historically defective, point of view. There is nothing to take us, as Mr. Haller's introduction does, and as history always should, into the mental processes of the period.[3] The notes on the individual documents are, naturally, inferior to Mr. Davies'. The chief value of Mr. Wolfe's collection, and it is real, is in the ten new documents which it renders available.

The documents in these two volumes help us to recover one of the patterns of political thinking in seventeenth-century England, the radical and democratic pattern in its relation to Puritanism. We must remember that there were other patterns. The Army Debates, besides further elucidating this one, clearly reveal a second pattern, revolutionary but not democratic, and another phase of Puritan utopianism, the ideal of rule by the Saints. Yet a third pattern is recovered in Professor Fink's admirable study, *The Classical Republicans*.

Central in this third pattern is the concept of the "mixed state" in which the three elements of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy are represented and act as a salutary check upon each other. The origins and affinities of this pattern are to be sought not in Puritanism but in classical humanism, and especially in Polybius' view of the governments of Sparta and Rome, and in Plutarch's account of the reforms of Lycurgus at Sparta. From these and other classical sources Mr. Fink proceeds to the Renaissance, with Machiavelli and the eulogists of Venice (the purest existing model of the mixed state) among the chief exponents of the concept, and with Bodin as its principal critic. Then, in more detail, he shows how the ideal of the mixed state, and the belief that England historically was such a state, were taken over by the opponents of Stuart absolutism, how the republicanism inherent in the Roman model was accentuated, and how the criticism of Bodin and Hobbes, that a mixed state involved the absurd and dangerous admission of a divided sovereignty, was answered by the assertion that sovereignty indeed lay with the people and was merely delegated. Thus the theory took on a more revolutionary character, was divested of its

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from the index. Mr. Wolfe's pages, which abound in references to his own *Milton in the Puritan Revolution*, ignore Mr. Haller's *Rise of Puritanism*, as well as Petegorsky (a fellow Leftist, but a more percipient one) and Barker.

[3]There is, needless to say, no adequate sense of the religious origins or affinities of the Levellers' ideas, which Mr. Haller and the present reviewer have sought in different ways to explain, though the designation "Puritans of the Left" might appear to be lifted from the latter if Mr. Wolfe had not supplied such abundant evidence that he was unfamiliar with the book.

supposed sanctions in English history, while retaining those in Graeco-Roman and Venetian, and became the basis for the Oceana of Harrington and the Free Commonwealth of Milton. Associated from the earliest date with the notion of the mixed state was that of the ideal legislator, exemplified in Lycurgus, who assumed absolute power in order to establish it and, when he had done so, withdrew. For this role according to Harrington Cromwell was cast, and according to Milton, General Monk. Nothing in the book is more illuminating than Mr. Fink's learned and closely argued account of the evolution of Milton's political thought. Among other things which it renders more intelligible is the combination in Milton of arguments derived from the sovereignty of the people with an insistence on the actual rule of the enlightened, of an aristocracy of virtue and ability. Here evidently other patterns whose sources are religious, cross and concur with this one whose source is humanistic. Such observations Mr. Fink leaves the reader to make for himself; but it confirms the essential soundness of his study, that they can be made. In a word, the book is a genuine and important contribution to our knowledge of political thinking of Milton and his age, and a highly successful "essay in the recovery of a pattern of thought in seventeenth-century England."

BASIC WRITINGS OF SAINT THOMAS[1] V. B. BREZIK

In philosophy, as in literature, there is no substitute for the very text of an author. However great the profit and enlightenment derived from reading books *about* thinkers and their thought, nothing can replace the study of their *ipsissima verba*. If language difficulties render the original writings inaccessible, the next best thing is a good translation. Such is admittedly true for the works of Plato and Aristotle, as it is for those of Kant and Bergson. It is no less the case with St. Thomas Aquinas.

For this reason, *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas* comes as a most welcome publication and advance orders indicated, several months before printing, that it was already assured of a good reception by the reading public. But there are other reasons too.

During the last generation or so, a lively interest in the philosophy of St. Thomas has steadily spread among people seeking to think their way through to an understanding of the deeper problems of reality and life. This explains, no doubt, the great increase in the number of studies on St. Thomas which have appeared in recent years, books, monographs, and articles in periodicals, written to expound his teaching or discuss its applications to present-day conditions.[2] Not a few of these works display

[1] *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas.* Edited and Annotated, with an Introduction. By Anton C. Pegis. Two Volumes. New York: Random House. 1945. Pp. liii, 1097; xxxi, 1179. ($7.50).

[2] A *Thomistic Bibliography*, covering the period 1920-40, published this spring by a graduate of the University of Toronto, Professor Vernon J. Bourke, of Saint Louis University, lists nearly five thousand titles.

decided vigour and freshness of thought and, in some instances, high literary merit. One need only mention the writings of Gilson and Maritain, names well known in Canada. Yet these very writers would be among the first to echo the exhortation of Pope Leo XIII, "that the wisdom of Thomas be drawn from its spring." For, the authentic source of a thinker's philosophy is his own writings; and the chief merit of books on his thought lies in leading others to the fountain and inviting them to drink.

This is what Professor A. C. Pegis has endeavoured to do in editing *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*. A graduate of the University of Toronto, where he received his Doctorate in Philosophy in 1933, Professor Pegis began his academic career in the Department of Philosophy at Marquette University, Milwaukee. Subsequently, he became Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University, New York, and at the present time occupies the chair of History of Philosophy in the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto. During the past ten years Dr. Pegis has published numerous studies in the history of mediaeval philosophy, two of which, *The Problem of the Soul in the XIIIth Century* and *St. Thomas and the Greeks* have attracted particular notice.

Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas is published in two large octavo volumes, each numbering well over a thousand pages. In spite of this, the publishers have succeeded in making these volumes quite maniable. The books are strongly bound in black buckram and attractively adorned with the arms of the House of Aquino mounted on a Dominican cross printed in gold and red on the cover. Were it not for war restrictions, a somewhat better paper would probably have been used, although the present paper in no way interferes with the legibility of the type.

The first volume, the general theme of which is "God and the Order of Creation," comprises the whole of the *Prima Pars* of St. Thomas's *Summa Theologiae*. The second treats of "Man and the Conduct of Life." It includes the third book of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* followed by the entire *Prima Secundae* of the *Summa Theologiae*, excepting the first five questions and the section on the Passions, and the treatise on Faith from the *Secunda Secundae*. A notable feature of this selection of texts is that it provides a fairly complete synoptic view of St. Thomas's thought and thus makes for continuity in the exposition of his teaching, avoiding the disconnectedness and confusion which commonly accompanies a mosaic of abbreviated texts.

The editor set out to provide for students a useful and reasonably clear English text of St. Thomas and he has successfully achieved his purpose. The translation marks a definite improvement over the English Dominican translation which, however, it follows in substance.

Students of St. Thomas should be grateful to Professor Pegis for including the annotations and references based on the work of the editors of the Ottawa-Piana *Summa Theologiae*. The work of these editors in locating both explicit and anonymous quotations in the text of St. Thomas constitutes a valuable contribution to the furtherance of Thomistic studies and

Professor Pegis has utilized their researches to advantage. He has also added an index of authors directly and indirectly cited by St. Thomas, thus considerably enhancing the utility of the volumes. This index gives not only a doctrinal picture as seen by St. Thomas but also, in many cases, a ready indication of some of the main points in the teachings of the authors St. Thomas quotes. Particularly is this the case with Aristotle, St. Augustine, and the Pseudo-Dionysius, who are treated even more systematically than the others. Besides a general table of contents, each volume contains a detailed list of the titles of questions and articles for the selected sections of the *Summa Theologiae* and of chapters for those of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*.

Anyone who has read extensively in St. Thomas's *Opera Omnia* (which in the Vivès edition runs to thirty-two volumes) will appreciate the problem of choosing basic texts for publication within the limits of two volumes. That Professor Pegis has borrowed largely from the *Summa Theologiae* is not surprising. Any selection of basic texts of St. Thomas must inevitably draw predominantly from this work, if only because his thought reaches here the height of its maturity and an incomparable compactness of statement. Moreover, the *Summa Theologiae* not only contains St. Thomas's most characteristic ideas and most fundamental principles, but also his views on the leading doctrines of Christian theology and philosophy. Such topics as the existence and nature of God, creation, the angels, man, knowledge, free-will, the end of man, divine providence, human acts, habits, virtues, vices, law, grace, and faith comprise matter for discussion in every age. And when they are discussed with the order, mastery, clarity, and depth of St. Thomas's treatises in the *Summa Theologiae*, the result is a classic well worthy, like every classic, of serious study and reflection.

Professor Pegis deliberately includes the chapters of the third book of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* which contain references to the obsolete astronomical theory of the spheres. This he does not only because of the historical and doctrinal importance of these chapters but also as an "illustration of the futility of arguing about bad science." He does not agree that philosophy is but "antiquated science" or even that it depends intrinsically on the natural sciences. Else, philosophy would evidently become outworn with the age; and St. Thomas, having lived in the thirteenth century, "would be automatically some seven hundred years behind the times." Obviously, St. Thomas did not escape the lot of every man of living in a particular epoch of history, of being subject to the limitations of time and bearing the marks of his age. Therefore, to find in his writings what belongs to the thirteenth century is no more than a sign that he has lived. "The only question is whether this part of St. Thomas was not the instrument and servant of another part, the part which is as free of time as it is free of change, and which gives to the perpetually changing elements of history their permanent human image."

In a remarkable preface, written with literary skill and philosophical insight, Professor Pegis sketches the historical setting for St. Thomas's writings. He describes succinctly the conflict between Hellenism and Christianity precipitated for the Christian thinkers by the introduction into the Latin world during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of an enormous Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic philosophical literature. The issue at stake arose not merely from the acceptance of the philosophical treatises of Aristotle and his commentators and the concomitant problem of dealing with the new philosophical ideas they contained. Certainly, this alone would have rendered the situation delicate enough. But, what increased the difficulty for Christian thinkers was that they had still to learn how to meet philosophical errors with philosophical truth and not merely with truths of faith, in a word, how to become philosophers.

The basic issue, then, concerned the nature of *wisdom*. Until the thirteenth century, Christian thinkers had looked upon the world mainly from the point of view of a Christian wisdom, which was not so much the culmination of rational speculation, as the flowering of a life of prayer. It was, precisely, infused wisdom bestowed by the Holy Ghost, giving light to the mind to see all things in their profoundly religious character. Such was the outlook bequeathed to the thirteenth century by St. Augustine, St. Gregory the Great, St. Anselm of Canterbury, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and Hugh and Richard of St. Victor.

Between this "cloisterly wisdom" and the wisdom of Greek philosophy, Professor Pegis discerns no necessary conflict, though certainly a diversity. In order to assimilate the true wisdom of Greece and to meet the challenge of Greek errors, Christian thought had to discover the realm of natural wisdom. Therein was the truth of Greek reflection rooted and upon that ground its errors could be judged. It was a question, in other words, of making explicit the respective differentiations within the orders of wisdom.

This problem St. Thomas treats in the opening question of the *Summa Theologiae*. There he clearly distinguishes philosophy from theology and theology from that wisdom which is a gift of the Holy Ghost. And having made this distinction, he was prepared to reject and refute philosophical errors by arguments "not based on documents of faith," as he says in another work, "but on the very reasons and statements of the philosophers." It is therefore interesting to observe how he handles such pressing questions of his day as Aristotle's doctrine of the eternity of motion, Avicenna's teaching on the agent intellect and Avicebron's position regarding universal matter.

Professor Pegis does not enlarge on these considerations, except perhaps for the question of the eternity of motion. Rather, what he is concerned to point out is how St. Thomas's distinction of the various wisdoms fitted him much better than any of his contemporaries for meeting the common problem of the thirteenth century. The task was to incorporate within Christian thought the vast learning and wisdom of Aristotle and his

commentators and to establish thereby a universal Christian synthesis receptive of all truths which the philosophers had to teach. William of Auvergne, St. Bonaventure, St. Albert, Roger Bacon, and Siger of Brabant were all occupied with this problem. The point of difference between them and St. Thomas lies in his unwillingness to accept either Avicenna or Averroes as the official interpreter of Aristotle and also in his refusal to regard Aristotle himself as the official spokesman of philosophy.

As Professor Pegis intimates, the achievement of St. Thomas, considered in its broad outlines, thus assumes the character of a liberation. In the very process of assimilating the newly discovered ideas into the bosom of Christian thought, he was promoting a philosophical revolution "by freeing philosophy from the philosophers and by reading the history of philosophy from the absolute point of view of philosophy."

For St. Thomas, the philosophical issues confronting the thirteenth century were reducible to the two fundamentally different, though philosophically possible, approaches to reality represented by the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions. St. Thomas's repeated criticism of Plato for patterning reality as it *is*, on reality as it is *thought*, is evidence enough of his own attitude. Professor Pegis has clearly indicated this. Yet it often happens that when emphasis is laid upon basic issues separating two doctrines, minor points held in common become overshadowed and even forgotten. After reading Professor Pegis's excellent introduction, it may not be out of place to keep this possibility in mind. The Aristotelianism of St. Thomas is not the Aristotelianism of history. His aim to construct a universal Christian synthesis, open to all truth, has enabled him to enrich his thought in many details by doctrines of Platonic inspiration also. What else could be expected from one whose constant counsel was to consider, not *who* said a thing, but the *truth* of what is said? St. Thomas, like his great predecessor St. Augustine, had also an eye for the spoils of the Egyptians.

SHORTER NOTICE

The Earliest English Poetry. A Critical Survey of the Poetry Written before the Norman Conquest with Illustrative Translations. By Charles W. Kennedy. London, New York, [Toronto]: Oxford University Press. 1943. Pp. viii, 375. ($4.00)

In this attractive volume Professor Kennedy performs a useful task in reappraising the whole corpus of Old English poetry in the light of recent historical and critical research. The poems are reviewed in topical and chronological order, with a summary of each and an alliterative translation of significant passages. Information is clearly presented as to manuscripts, problems of authorship, historical and social backgrounds, and literary influences; and the poetic worth of each text is estimated with critical

discrimination. Professor Kennedy's opinion of this poetry is favourable, sometimes enthusiastic; but he does not allow a specialist's partiality to blur his critical judgment. His general position is that Old English poetry is not "the primitive and naïve product of untutored bards", but the work of skilful and sensitive artists, who blended the pagan beliefs and ideals of their native tradition with Christian doctrines and classical culture. In a final estimate he says of this poetry: "Much is excellent, some is timeless and immortal. The heartbreak of the elegies, the stout-spirited fortitude of the battle poems, the antique grace and energy of the Christian allegories, the gentle and lonely accents of Cynewulf, the terror and awe of the Judgment poems, the lyric adoration of the *Dream of the Rood*, such poetry is memorable in any age." Above all the rest he places the *Beowulf*, as most nearly achieving a fusion of the Germanic, the Classical, and the Christian spirit.

As to classical influence on the *Beowulf*, Professor Kennedy makes it very probable that three passages in Hrothgar's famous description of the haunted mere are reminiscences of three passages all found within 92 lines of the Seventh Book of the *Aeneid*.[1] Grendel's mountain torrent, shadowed by gloomy trees, resembles the Virgilian Vale of Amsanctus, where the Fury (like Grendel) descends to the under-world.[2] The tossing waves that mount to heaven hardly fit the waterfall in Beowulf, and might well be from Virgil's simile of ocean waves rising to the sky at the height of a storm.[3] Hrothgar's striking description of the antlered hart, pursued by hounds yet preferring death to shelter in the uncanny mere, is partially paralleled by Virgil's stag, driven by hounds from the bank of a stream.[4] In elaborating this richly imaginative speech, the *Beowulf* poet may well have recalled the imagery of these three separate passages.

Thoroughly convincing is Professor Kennedy's argument that the so-called Riddles 2 and 3 form only one riddle, of which the answer is *Wind*. Following scientific traditions which may be traced back through Bede to Pliny and Lucretius, the riddle describes four types of storm, caused respectively by wind *under the sea*, which stirs the ocean from its depths; by wind *under the earth* (long thought the cause of earthquakes[5]); by wind *above the sea*, driving wrecked vessels over its surface; and by wind *among the clouds*, whose collision produces thunder. Each of the four types is introduced by the same formula and followed by an attribution of the wind's effects to God's power; then follows a recapitulation and a formal demand for the solution. This demonstration of the riddle's unity is clarified by the author's admirable translation of the whole poem.

W. H. C.

[1] *Beowulf*, 1357-1376; *Aeneid*, VII, 479-571.
[2] *Beowulf*, 1359-1364 and also 852; *Aeneid*, VII, 563-571.
[3] *Beowulf*, 1373-1376; *Aeneid*, VII, 528-530.
[4] *Beowulf*, 1368-1372; *Aeneid*, VII, 483-486; 493-495.
[5] Cf. Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part I*, III, 1, 27-33.